

Ashley Urbina

Ethan Thompson

William (Bill) Branch was a military veteran who accomplished loads of greatness but also had some doubts. Branch is a 83 year old who served 21 years in the Air Force. Branch is a family man who loved his wife and kids but seeked for a thrilling lifestyle as a pilot. Branch served in Vietnam, and the Cold Wars. Throughout his experience he achieved over 100 combat missions.

Branch was born in 1931 in Oxford, North Carolina in the heart of the Great Depression. He and his parents then moved to Washington, D.C. in hope for employment during our nation's hard time. After High School, Bill then attended the University of Maryland and was a part of the ROTC program. He decided to take advanced ROTC programs at the university, which allowed him to become an officer right after college. Bill clearly saw an opportunity, and he took it. During his Junior year of college, he married his high- school sweetheart which he said was the best decision of his life.

After college, he then moved on to his first call of duty in the military by being a communications officer in the Pentagon which he served for three years. Being in the military, Bill described how life was like having to move home many times and how it was for his children. Bill believes that family should always stick together so wherever he went, his wife and his three children went with him. In Vietnam, where he saw most of his battlefield action, Bill completed over 100 missions by deploying troops and supplies to desolate areas by using the C7A Caribou. Bill recalled that everyday during the Vietnam he was being fired at by the Viet

Cong but throughout the entire war his plane was never hit. During Bill's service his favorite memory was simply everytime he got to fly. Bill received recognition medals such as the National Defense, Air Medals, Legion of Merit, and many other commendation medals. By the end of Bill's career, he was checked out to fly 7 different types of aircrafts including planes such as the C-124, T-29, and C-118. Whenever Bill had any free time while he was serving he tried to spend all the time he could with his wife and kids.

Bill believes that once you start something, you should finish it and in the Vietnam War America failed to do this. Many people looked at Vietnam Vets as failures and losers, but throughout the course of the war America never lost any battles in Vietnam. After his 21 year career as an Air Force officer, Bill continued to work and accomplish new goals. Bill went into the real-estate business and also had his own tax company. He also was able to attend USC while in the Air Force and gain a masters degree. He was completely retired at the age of 76, but still occasionally does tax work for close friends and family to this day.

Bill absolutely loved serving his country and did it with great pride and honor through the course of his career. He gained many memories and friendships along the way and enjoyed every second of it. He served with great respect and meaning toward his country. He also said that if he had the chance do it all over again, he would do it.

Growing up in the Great Depression Bill came across many obstacles, but he never let the circumstances he was in effect what he felt he was destined to do. He had the opportunity right in front of him and always took it. Overall Bill Branch succeeded in most of what he put his heart into. Branch always made the effort to secure all his companions and friends. Branch

enjoyed every part of his service and would willingly do it again. From Bill Branch himself he states “ I'd still being flying my plane today if they would let me”.



