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Period 1  
Elijah (Bill) Williams  
U.S Air Force  
21 years  
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Elijah ( Bill ) Williams

America remembers and honors those who have had the courage to pledge their lives to defend this nation so that people can live peacefully and with freedom while they are out fighting. Every man and women who has stepped out on and off the battlefield has sacrificed their lives for everyone. Even every soldier who has lived on to this day continues to put this country before anything else. That is a true sacrifice. Veterans are who they are because of their unique selflessness, honor , bravery and devotion to the nation and people. They are not a specific gender, race, or status. Though they are seen in lines at the store or in family homes playing with children , we erroneously take them as ordinary , for they are anything but ordinary. Veterans possess extraordinary qualities that make them able to go out and put everything else before themselves. They do not represent their families, friends, or even themselves for they represent the country as a whole. They are the image and face that the nation stands for. For people's lives rely and are in the hands of these strong men and women. These are veterans. This is Elijah Bill Williams.

On May 11, 1929 Elijah Williams started out his journey in Canfield Arkansas as a boy who faced segregation at a young age. Walking 4 miles to elementary school everyday as well as having to move to a different state just for an education was the price he paid for being an

African American during a time of segregation. The reward was finding his high school sweetheart, Frances. With no one trying to push his education farther, instead of going off to college Williams decided to take an entrance exam for the military in which he scored 98%. Due to his high scoring he was able to choose whatever field he wanted. With that he chose the Air Force because in his own words, “ it sounded good.” Not only was facing segregation in 1945 an issue , but it was also enforced in the military. None of his family members had any objections to him joining the Air Force. Before Elijah left he asked his high school sweetheart to marry him. Williams first base he was sent to basic military training in October of 1947, at Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio Texas Air Force Base where an all black training squad was waiting there. The only positions waiting after basic training service, such as motor pool, cooking, cleaning, and mowing services. After one year in 1948 president Truman ordered no segregation in the military. This changed everything. Blacks and whites were then mixed with each other introducing equal opportunities and duties in all fields. First base assignment was Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield-Suisun, California. After one year at Travis Air Force base in Williams got shipped off to Okinawa where some difficulties arose . While working a payroll job a typhoon rolled in and swept all his work away, but due to his exceptional memory the payroll records were re-written. His actions caused him to receive a promotion to corporal which was two stripes. During all of the commotion he was notified that his first daughter was born.

Elijah got caught up with pneumonia and was hospitalized , but that didn't stop anyone from still shipping him out. After leaving Okinawa he went back home. His next assignment where he met his new commander captain Thomas Esmond was at Keesler Air Force base in, Biloxi Mississippi. There he met Thomas which over time became a very significant person in

Williams life. There he also got promoted again to three stripes. Finally making his way up in the military , the next shipment was to Laredo Air Force base, Texas. Where basic training for pilots occurred. The next assignment was at James Conway Air Force base in Waco, Texas where they encountered the Tuskegee Airmen. He was assigned to James Conway Air Force base until 1956. Williams was in Texas for so long as he got tired of it and got shipped out to March Air Force Base. There he was a tech sergeant in the 320th bomb wing department.

At this time Elijah struggled with finding what he really wanted to do or whether or not he should stay in the military. He talked to his wife, who traveled with him to every base after marriage, supportively and encouragingly she told him to do whatever made him happy. Now moving fields to management analysis, he was then assigned overseas to RAF upper Heyford, England where he created a program that dealt with flying in which he was recognized greatly for. Then traveling to Vandenberg Air Force base Williams was introduced to missiles. There he worked for one and a half years. He struggled with trying for promotion to msat. Which he then attended NCO Academy, graduated with honor. At the missile base he was rewarded with a promotion. He was then shipped to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Next to March Air Force base..

Recalling the day October 1, 1968, Elijah Williams decided to retire after 21 years of service. He took an insurance claim service class and then got a job at State Farm. He worked there for 24 years and ended that career in 1991. It was hard to support his family just from being in the military so getting a job after he retired was very important. After not only going through a loss of his oldest daughter , he got diagnosed with prostate cancer, but just like in everything else he beat it, and survived. To this day he is apart of the Country Village Veterans Association and

VFW as well as keeping in touch with his fellow Air Force veterans weekly via email. Elijah Williams did want to fly in his career, but doesn't regret a thing for he says he is so blessed.

Veterans such as Elijah Bill Williams are forever honored and remembered for they have done more than most and have put others lives in front of their own. They are brave in and out of the service and honorable throughout their life which that is more than you can say about most. An individual's actions going unnoticed and taken for granted is one who has kept this nation united and what it is today. These men and women traveled down a path that most wouldn't dare, without a doubt. They made a decision to represent and protect this country so that in their absence people can live the lives they want. Through army veterans this nation was built. A veteran is not someone who joined to fight and kill, for the only thing they fight for is this country, to serve and protect the people is the duty they signed up for. They are the ones who wake up every morning knowing they gave themselves up for a purpose. No matter how old, what race, or status, Veterans are the image of what this country stands for and it's something to be proud of. Williams is a Veteran who went through more than most just to make a life for himself because no one else was going to give it to him. He lived everyday fighting for a better tomorrow and fighting for the people who came after him. After a successful career in the service he retired with 45 years of labor and on May 11, 2018 he will turn 89 years young and is still married to his high school sweetheart of 70 years.