



SFC DORIS MORGAN

I grew up in Harlem and the Bronx in New York. I attended Washington Irving High School, the Helene Fuld School of Practical Nursing, and Columbia University. My older brother was a member of the elite Tuskegee Airmen. I always admired his devotion and love for family and country.

After graduating from nursing school, during the Viet Nam era, I noticed that many of my classmates were being drafted into the Army. A few had been killed in action. I felt a duty and responsibility to help out by using my LPN skills in the military.

I served in the U. S. Army from September 1966 through December 1970. My basic training was at Ft. McClellan, Alabama; I then received advanced individual training at Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, Texas. After my training, I was assigned to Valley Forge General Hospital in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

Valley Forge General Hospital was a most rewarding and challenging assignment. There I encountered the most devastating injuries imaginable, including amputations and complete mutilation of body parts. However, I learned, under the tutelage of members of the Army Nurse Corps, how to use debridement to clean the wounds and how to dress the wounds. I looked forward to each day, observing the progress of many of the soldiers, watching them learn to use their prosthetic devices, seeing their determination to reenter civilian life.

I served on active duty at Valley Forge General Hospital as a corpsman, or "91 Charlie," as we were affectionately known. Then I took a break from active service and entered the United States Army Reserve in September 1980. While in the Reserves, I was assigned to the 74th Field Hospital, in Orangeburg, N.Y. My job there was Chief Ward Master. I was also deployed to Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. during Desert Storm, from 1990 to 1991. After serving a total of 21 years, I retired in September 1998, with the rank of Sergeant First Class (SFC).

After leaving military service, I worked at the Bronx VA Medical Center. At the same time, I attended Columbia University and earned a master's degree in social work, which I used in my work as the homeless coordinator at the VA.

Growing up in a Christian home, I was taught that God would take care of what I couldn't. Working with many of the wounded at Valley Forge and knowing the challenges they faced to overcome their injuries was inspirational. Many were just boys, 18 or 19 years of age, but

they were determined to overcome these obstacles. At the Bronx VA Hospital, I again encountered the devastation of war. The veterans and their families continued to suffer from the aftermath of war, including PTSD, substance abuse and mental illness. However, my faith gave me the strength to keep trying to help these brave men and women regain their health and their place in society.

I am very proud of my military service.