

Kathryn Chermak Derrick  
United States Air Force  
Nurse



Lieutenant Kathryn Chermak Derrick, a crucial figure among Air Force Reservist nurses during the Vietnam War, exemplified unwavering dedication. Stationed at Tachikawa Airfield, Tokyo, she worked tirelessly with the 921st Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, converting cargo planes into impromptu intensive care units. Kathryn and her team transformed these aircraft into sanctuaries for wounded soldiers, from young privates with shrapnel injuries to veterans grappling with unseen scars.

Amidst the chaos and constant threat of enemy fire, Kathryn administered care with both clinical expertise and heartfelt compassion. Her role extended beyond medical aid; she offered solace, lending a listening ear and a reassuring presence to soldiers amidst their anguish.

Adding to the complexity of her service, Kathryn's husband served as a C130 pilot, intertwining their commitment to serving their country in different capacities.

The flight to Elmendorf AFB, Fairbanks Alaska provided a momentary respite for these soldiers, with Kathryn not only delivering medical attention but also a humane touch—comforting and supporting them. Upon arrival, she transitioned her patients to military hospitals, meticulously documenting their conditions to ensure seamless continuity of care.

Kathryn's service, emblematic of the commitment of countless Air Force Reservist nurses during the war, illuminates the resilience and compassion amidst adversity. Their valor and sacrifices, etched into military history, serve as a poignant testament to the human toll of conflict and the enduring compassion that prevails even in the bleakest moments.

Her discharge on October 8th, 1975, marked the culmination of her service as a 1st Lieutenant, a small chapter in a larger narrative of selfless dedication and unwavering service to the wounded.