

Colonel Virginia Brice

Dates of Service: August 1944 - February 1974

Col Brice, deceased on Oct 6, 2014, was one of the thirty-eight US Army dietitians who voluntarily transferred from the US Army to become the first US Air Force dietitians when the Air Force Medical Service was established in 1949. Although she spent only two years (1949 - 1951) in the US Air Force, Col Brice maintained friendships with her AF colleagues throughout her distinguished career in the US Army and for many years after retirement she continued to enjoy social events with her AF friends and colleagues. She was a loyal member of our Retired Air Force Dietitians Association and contributed her experiences and stories to our historical collections.

When she transferred to the US Air Force in 1949, Col Brice was an experienced US Army officer and had already seen a great deal of the world starting with military basic training at Camp Rucker, Alabama to Army hospitals in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, the Western Pacific during World War II, Germany and then to Texas.

Col Brice recounted her World War II assignment (March 1945 – Feb 1946) to the US Army 310th General Hospital located on Tinian Island in the Marianas, not far from Japan. Their mission was to prepare to receive patients from the anticipated invasion of Japan. Fortunately for the Allied forces, a ground invasion of Japan was not necessary because Japan surrendered after the infamous bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Col Brice wrote that they had an Officers Club on the island and that she dated an Army Air Corps officer, a Bombardier on a B-29.

Never did I have an inkling that the Enola Gay, a B-29, was on the island preparing for a very special bombing mission. ... We were on Tinian at the time of the Enola Gay's famous flight in August 1945 and were issued a campaign star to wear on our Asiatic-Pacific Campaign ribbons.

During her two years in the Air Force, Col Brice was stationed with an Air Force hospital unit on duty at the Army hospital in El Paso, Texas. She transferred back to the Army in 1951 and served in many of the Army's largest medical centers until her final assignment to a Headquarters staff position in 1970. She ended her illustrious 30-year military career at the top of her field: Assistant Chief AMSC, and Chief Dietitian, Office of the Surgeon General, Washington D.C.

We remember Col Brice as an exemplary leader in our sister service and as a friend and supporter of her AF colleagues. Rest in Peace.