

Lamont Tellis: Double career

by TSgt Chuck Davis
142nd Fighter Interceptor Group
Oregon Air National Guard

Lamont Tellis likes "working for something I believe in... something I can sell honestly, without fooling anybody." Tellis is one of the Oregon Air National Guard's top recruiters, but the military is only one part of his life. He's also an artist and a clergyman.

Tellis, a Portland-area native, joined the Air Force following his 1964 graduation from Jefferson High School. He served in Southeast Asia with an intelligence unit. As an illustrator, Tellis prepared briefings for pilots flying combat missions.

Later, Tellis was assigned to a "fast reaction situation analysis team" at the Pentagon. The team's mission was to keep the president, the Air Force Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force informed of anything that affected national security. In the course of his duties, Tellis saw President Nixon at close range on several occasions.

In 1975, Tellis left the regular Air Force, returned to Portland and joined the Oregon Air National Guard as an illustrator. He also attended Portland Community College and the University of Portland, studying mechanical engineering. From 1977 to 1980, Tellis put his training to use as a technical illustrator in a Tektronix engineering group. He prepared instruction manuals and worked closely with engineers.

As if he wasn't busy enough, Tellis became very active in the Church of God in Christ in Portland. In 1977, he was licensed as a minister. His work with youth propelled him into a part-time position as public relations director for the State of Oregon's youth department. In 1978, Tellis became executive secretary for his denomination and, in 1980, was ordained.

Tellis became a full-time recruiter for the Air National Guard in 1980. "I like working with people," he explains. "The Air National Guard offers a lot of opportunities for young people. The Guard is necessary. It's a localized, state and community-oriented organization, as well as being a useful federal asset."

In addition to its full-time air defense alert mission, Tellis points out, the Air National Guard is involved in the community. As an example, he cites the Guard's participation, with the Housing Authority of Portland, in a summer camp at the coast for inner-city children. The Guard, he says, also helped in the 1980 Mt. St. Helens disaster, water main breaks in northeast Portland and in other emergencies.

Tellis finds the public is becoming more receptive to recruiters. "The Vietnam stereotypes, which come from an unpopular situation, are fading," he asserts. "The military's image has improved." Tellis adds that he sees more patriotism, professionalism and "esprit de corps" in the Guard itself.

Besides the opportunity to serve their country and community, Tellis says, there are many benefits for young people who join the Guard: "The educational program is one of the best. Air Force and Air Guard training can earn college credits. Not only that, the Guard offers non-contributory retirement benefits, opportunities for travel and an insurance program."

Tellis, in short, believes in and likes his job. His enthusiasm resulted in his appointment in 1982 as senior recruiting advisor for the Oregon Air National Guard. He says he plans to continue his military service at least five more years and then devote himself full time to the ministry.

Tellis, his wife Claudia and children Stephanie, Lamont, Jr., Annise, Michael and Chimene live in Northeast Portland.



Lamont Tellis

Fit your personality

While preparing for your career remember your own personality. Are you a leader or do you need direction? Can you take close supervision or do you rebel? Can you make decisions and take responsibility or would you prefer that someone else take the risk? Do you work well with others or do you prefer to be alone? Do you prefer physical labor or working with your mind? Are you willing to spend years of study and research to keep up with your field? If you like physical labor are you well coordinated, quick with your hands and strong enough to perform the job? Are you creative or do you like repetitive work?

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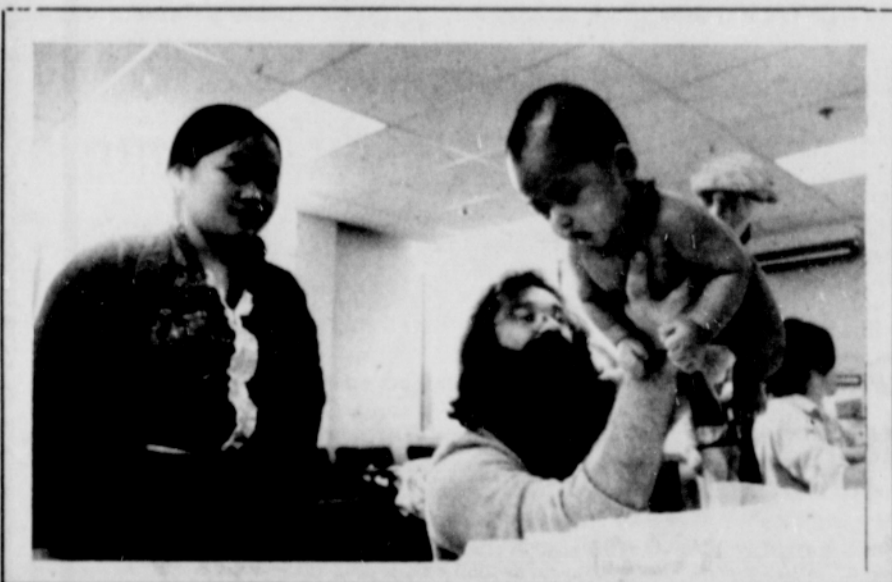
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