

Name: Robert C. Holster (E-5 Staff Sergeant)

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] OR. 97624

Which Branch did you enter? I enlisted into the United States Air Force (Oregon Air National Guard).

Why Did you Choose this branch? I chose the Oregon Air National Guard because it is close to home.

Years of service? May, 2011 to present

Where did you attend basic Training? San Antonio Lackland Air Force Base

Where Did I serve? I have only Served at Kingsley Field Air National Guard Base

What was your Job? For 9 years I was an Aircraft Mechanic doing major inspections and doing extensive repairs to F-15 fighter jets. For the last 3 years I have been a Dedicated Crew Chief, where I manage a F-15 and do inspections before flight, between flights, and after flights. I ensure the aircraft is ready for flight and that the pilots are receiving a safe Jet.

Special Friends that you created while serving? There is vast number of friendships that I have created with several different people, two really are special to me. First is Technical Sgt Ashely Vela, Ashely Has become like a sister to me and the second is Technical Sgt Chris Willmott who has been the biggest mentor I've had in my military career.

Commanding Officer that you especially remember? Major Richard Schuster is my current commander and was the one who seen the importance of my Nose Art for my Jet. Major Schuster directed me to coordinate a ceremony to dedicate my nose art that represents Our First Code Talkers.

No pets or animals to speak of

I never served over seas

Was there a point during your service that you decided the military was, or was not, the right career choice? I joined the military after a long-drawn-out divorce of two years. My life was starting to head down the wrong path as began to drink heavily. One night after drinking a bottle of vodka I realized I had a problem and told myself, my kids deserve better from me. I knew I needed structure back into my life. I had driven by the recruiter's office several times on my way to court and realized that's what I need in my life.

I never intended to make the military a career till after my youngest child was born and went through yet another custody battle. I used to be an Engine Captain with the USDA Forest Service and I was told if I do not get out of fighting fires, I will lose my son to every other weekend. So, I left the Forest Service and went full time to the Air National Guard.

Is there a battle or point during your service that you would like to describe so that future generations can better understand the military life can be- for better or worse? Not sure if there is a specific point but would like to say the military is a great way to see the world and/or to have schooling paid for. Have great benefits as well. The military has almost every job opportunity that you can think of. Get trained in any career field and take that experience to the civilian world.

Medals and Citations Received

Commendation Medal

The Air Force Achievement Medal

Meritorious Service Medal with Silver Star

What or who did you leave behind when you joined the military? I left my two older children, Araya and Nakoah behind to go off to basic training. That was one of the hardest things I had ever done in my life.

What type of training or schooling do you have? I have a high school diploma and attended technical school in the Air Force for aircraft maintenance for the F-15 fighter jet.

What is your most vivid memory of your time in training or in school? What was the best part? What was the worst? The hardest part of being in Basic Training was not being able to talk to my kids every day. The greatest day of training was the day of graduation. My parents had brought my children to watch me graduate Basic Training.

While in technical school at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, TX. On 08 December 2011 marching in formation back to the dorms from the school house, something popped into my head saying my children had been in a car accident. No matter how many times I tried to not think of those

thoughts, it was actually true. When I had arrived back to my dorm room my cell phone was ringing off the hook. It was my parents informing me my kids had been in an accident. It took over an hour to find out Array and Nakoah were fine, and both had been in their car seats. My daughter was 4 yrs of age at the time. Little bit of a back story. I had spent 15 years of my life on the Chiloquin fire department. The worst day while on the job was back in 2005 where a family of 5 had passed away from going head on into a simi. By the time we got there the father and four-year-old boy were still breathing. After gaining access to the four-year-old, I took over stabilizing his head as we laid him on the back board, that is when he took his last breath. 6 years later my daughter now 4 and being in a car accident made it to where I could not sleep for a week. Every time I tried to close my eyes it was my daughters face, I was laying down for the last time. This was the worst part of training being 2000 miles away and not being able to be there for my children.

First assignment after training? My first assignment was to return home and get hands on experience of my actual job.

No Specialized training to mention

Do not recall my instructor

Did you qualify for equipment? I am currently qualified as a forklift operator, aircraft towing vehicle (tug) and aircraft de-ice truck.

What was the hardest part of Training? The hardest part of training is studying and learning military terms vs civilian terms / learning 100s of different acronyms.

Did you receive any promotions? I have received three Promotions while in the military. Promoted from E-3 to E-4, E-4 to E-5 and, Assistant Crew Chief to Dedicated Crew Chief.

What was the easiest part of the military lifestyle for you to adapt to? The easiest part of the military lifestyle for me to adapt to would be listening and following instruction. I come from a fire background of 18 years, fighting fires both structure and wildland. It is imperative to listen and follow instruction to the "T".

No War Time Experience

How did your military service experience affect your life? The military affected my life in several different ways, good and bad. Good; the military has brought structure and discipline back into my life and fine tuned my attention to detail. With this comes sacrifices of the "bad". I would take home the military ways and my kids were affected greatly. I wasn't allowing my kids to be kids and allowing them to make mistakes and learn from their own mistakes. One day of early 2022 I noticed my children were not happy while at our house. Finally, after several attempts of asking what the matter was my daughter now 15 opened up. Araya and I had spoken for over 5 hours on why her and her two brothers were so unhappy. I didn't realize how my military persona was affecting my children. My daughter had opened my eyes to how I was being as a father and from that day forward I have left work at work, and we couldn't have a happy home now.

What are some Life lessons you have learned from the military? One important life lesson I have learned is to separate military life from home life. You may lose the ones you love the most without even knowing it. Military personnel are trained to a higher level and held at a higher level than the average person. This is hard for individuals to understand fully what military members thought processes are. In my mind this can be what makes a difficult home life. I am extremely proud of my daughter for opening my eyes and making me realize what I was doing.

What do you wish more people knew about veterans? I wish people could fully understand what a lot of veterans have gone through in their military career and know that they may have seen things that most people will never experience in their life. I wish people would understand that our military members have signed on the dotted line basically saying " I will risk my own life to protect your way of life".

Where were you born and who were your parents? I was Born in Klamath Falls, Or to Charles D Holster and Susan E Holster.

Where did you go to school? I attended all 12 years of school in Chiloquin Or and graduated in 2000.

Did you have brothers and sisters? I have one sister and one Brother. Sheri M. Holster and Chadric D Holster.

Some Family Traditions have you passed down? Some family traditions I have started with my children are attending powwows and ceremonies letting them know their heritage.

How would you describe yourself? I would describe myself as a person to put others before self. A person who cares and willing to help as much as I can. A Family man, a father who wants the best life for his children.

I, Robert C Holster Herby authorize my answers and information to be used for the Veterans Archive Project and any further information needed including photography.

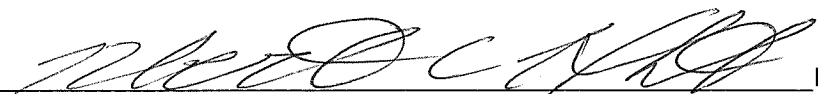
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