

HERITAGE TODAY



OATH OF SERVICE

We stood in lines and raised our right hands and then all of a sudden we weren't kids anymore. It's not that we grew up. We just knew that we had to be different now. When they say repeat after me and you state your name, it sounds like a mess. A bunch of voices saying their names at the same time, all proud of who they are. By the end of the oath, you're one voice. All proud of what you share. The oath is our bond and what keep Airman together. We solemnly swore that we would support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that we would bear true faith and allegiance to the same and that we would obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over us, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Maybe a lot of us had never even read the constitution. But that piece of paper we were swearing to give our lives for spelled out everything America was capable of. The greatness that was yet to come. Freedoms, rights, powers, duties, responsibilities. *That's* what we were defending. Against all enemies. And now you've taken that oath. You swore to do what was required of you. What is required will be more than you thought you had. You will be given boundaries and borders. But you will also be shown horizons. Your orders are to do the impossible. Your orders are to conquer fears. Your orders are to do things we couldn't dream of. Your orders are not to live up to some romantic idea of what we were. Your orders are to do better than us. Your orders are not to drag our memory with you like a weight. Your orders are to let us carry you to places we couldn't find. Your orders are to be Airmen. The oath is not a limitation. It's a starting gun. You have not sworn to do what so many brave men and women have done before. You've sworn to do what no one has done before. Do not repeat after us. Do better. Aim high, Airman.