

HERITAGE TODAY



# MAINTAINERS

## THE DRIVING FORCE

We weren't the kind to go looking for the spotlight. We didn't need our hands held. We did our jobs just fine without getting pats on the head. Of course, when something went wrong or something got busted, yeah...that's when the spotlight found us. The Air Force never did manage to build a plane that would fix itself. We were maintainers. Flight line warriors. And when it's not hot, miserable, dirty work...it's cold, miserable, dirty work. We love it. We hate it...but we love it. Because we love this country. We love making things right. We love the challenge. We love the pressure, the deadlines, the long hours. If it was easy, we wouldn't get that rush of accomplishment. We live for that rush. And we get it every day. With our hands, we make that jet fly again. We turn a bunch of metal and circuits back into a missile. We're inside these machines. In the cockpits, in the landing gear, the munitions, the engines, every button every pilot ever pushed—that's us. You think a B-52 has a lot of complicated wires? You've never seen how we're wired. We're part of a team no one on the outside will ever understand. You won't get it until you're in it, until you're one of us. That's our world inside the red line. You enter our world where we tell you. People try to tell us all the time that our jobs are 'just as important as the pilots'. It's not a competition. If we don't do our jobs right, people get hurt. Of course our jobs are important. Do the unsung heroes need to be sung about every now and then? Maybe. But don't sing too long because, with

all due respect, we've got work to do. We'll roll our eyes, and then we'll roll up our sleeves. We'll get it done because if we don't get it done, it doesn't get done. We know we're good. We don't want other people to know we're good, we just want them to know that we know. The satisfaction we get we keep on the inside. We are a special breed, maintainers. We're a team- crazy loyal to our country and tirelessly devoted to our mission. We pull 12s, we work nights and weekends, we don't sleep and we stick together. If it breaks, we fix it. No matter what. We are the men and women who keep this Air Force flying. We are the driving force. We're the glue. We're the sweat. We're the wrenches and the coffee. And if you want to know the truth, there's only one reason maintainers couldn't fix the whole world. Can't fit the whole world into a hangar. Aim high, Airman.