

# Kirk Almquist

Field mechanic • Commercial Airplanes,  
737 Preflight • Renton, Wash.

**SERVICE: U.S. AIR FORCE, 1977 TO  
1983 • RETIRED FROM AIR FORCE  
RESERVES IN 2009**

My U.S. Air Force career began in June 1977, the summer after my sophomore year in high school. Through an innovative program, I began basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, then attended technical school at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. I reported one weekend a month during the school year. During the winter break of my senior year, I deployed with a maintenance team for three weeks to Yakota Air Base in Japan.

I served my first enlistment through 1983 as a crew chief on the Lockheed C-141A Starlifter. Then I returned to the reserves in 1984 to become a flight engineer on the C-141B. Through 1989, I flew from bases in Europe, Southeast Asia and the Outback of Australia.

In 1987 I joined Boeing and, as my work here began to demand my full attention, I transferred to the inactive reserves in 1989. I found that I wanted to continue my career in the Air Force but with less of a travel requirement. So in 1994, I transferred to the Air Force Security Forces as a weapons instructor under the Combat Arms shop.

The attack on the World Trade Center brought the importance of weapons training into keen focus. With the sudden requirement for security and training personnel, my squadron was activated on Sept. 23, 2001. We hit the ground running, training 16,000-plus people—both active and reserve—during 2002 and 2003. We sometimes worked 16 hours a day.

I retired with the rank of senior master sergeant with 30 years of service. The people made it a great experience through many demanding times. The camaraderie is something you just can't explain to someone who has not experienced military service. I miss it. But I stay in touch. Some of the security guards right here at Renton Field are members in the unit I belonged to, and that helps me keep up with what's going on. **PHOTO: JIM COLEY/BOEING**

