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## Veteran grateful for opportunity to protect freedom

By: Dan Diercks, Guest Columnist

I have been a member of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office since May 5, 1997. I have worked a variety of positions, including detention, transition, training and patrol. I was recently promoted to the position of sergeant.

I have been blessed to serve with some of the finest individuals in law enforcement, while belonging to what I feel is one of the premier law enforcement agencies in the nation. In addition, it has been my distinct honor to serve the citizens of Johnson County over the last 11 years.

On this Independence Day, I am reflecting on the life I have been fortunate enough to lead but I would be remiss without recognizing another aspect of my personality, and so many others like me. Knowing those things that come easily can just as easily be taken away, I am keenly aware that the blessings and freedoms we have in this nation did not come to us without great sacrifice. I knew from a very early age those freedoms have a price, which is eternal vigilance.

Independence Day comes and goes each year with the flair of fireworks, family gatherings and the nation remembering those who so selflessly have served and died for their country. This is a time of year I take a moment to appreciate all of the freedoms I have, remembering all of those before me who have made this country the greatest country in the world.

I am a 21-year veteran of the United States Air Force, having served almost entirely in the Security Forces career field. I have had an eventful career, having served our nation through the Cold War, Operation Just Cause, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, the Balkans, and presently the global war on terrorism. I have been deployed twice during the global war on terrorism and am proud to have served my country in defeating our enemies around the world.

The military is where I found that the only limitations in this life are those I place on myself. It without a doubt gave drive and direction to a young man who wasn't quite sure where he was going.

The success I am blessed with in this life is due in great part to my military experiences. It is those very experiences which have shaped me into an effective public servant.

I am grateful to the members of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office and the citizens of Johnson County for the gracious support I continue to receive. It would not be possible in these trying times without it. More importantly, I am grateful to those men and women who have served, and continue to serve, many having made the ultimate sacrifice. God bless America!

Maj. Dan R. Diercks serves as commander of the 442nd Security Forces Squadron. Whiteman Air Force Base.

As a sergeant with the Johnson County Sheriff's Office he serves in the Traffic and Patrol Division.

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