

When duty calls

Boeing honors the men and women who have served, and who continue to serve, in the military, defending freedom around the world. More than 27,500 veterans and reservists work for The Boeing Company. Here are a few of their stories.





Dennis Durrwachter

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SERVICE: U.S. AIR FORCE, 1971 TO 1975

My father was a World War II veteran and always had stories about his travels as a U.S. Navy pilot. As a boy, I thought it sounded really exciting. After high school I joined the Air Force hoping to see the world, although I really didn't get to travel much while in the service. But I ended up working with veterans in a way I never could have imagined back then.

My permanent duty station was Whiteman Air Force Base here in Missouri, where I was a missile systems analyst specialist. It was our job to troubleshoot and repair support equipment for Minute-

man missile sites and launch-control centers so the missiles could remain in what was called Strategic Alert (ready to launch). This was a weapon that could change the course of history. It was a profound realization for a 19-year-old.

After the service I used the GI Bill to get an engineering technology degree from Purdue University and joined McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis in 1980.

My life changed in 1999 when my dad and I were partially paralyzed in the crash of a small airplane. Now I get around in a wheelchair. It has opened a lot of doors

for me with a lot of different experiences. I'm active in the St. Louis Gateway chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, or PVA. We advocate for the disabled in St. Louis, especially for the health care of disabled vets using the Veterans Administration health care system. It's a great organization and I'm very proud of everything we do.

You can learn more about the PVA at its Web site: Gatewaypva.org

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