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"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." -Winston Churchill.

Reflecting on Memorial Day and looking forward to Independence Day, we should reflect on the sacrifices made for our freedom. As an airline captain during 9/11 and military veteran, I feel compelled to share a story I read in the Washington Post that brought tears to my eyes.

In the fall of 2001, Heather Penney, a rookie, was the first female F-16 pilot the 121st Fighter Squadron in D.C. ever had. The squadron had just finished two weeks of air combat training and were sitting in the briefing room when someone announced that a plane had hit the World Trade Center. A few minutes later, the Pentagon was hit and a fourth plane was reported to be on the way. Nothing was prepped and the jets were still equipped with dummy ammo. Weapons or not, somebody had to fly - and now. It was decided that Penney would fly with Col. Sasseville. As they scrambled to suit up, Sasseville volunteered for the cockpit. Without hesitating, Penney agreed to take the tail. Doing away with the usual half hour of preflight checks and with the crew chief still scrambling to pull the safety pins, she powered up the engines. They took off to the northwest, flew over the Pentagon and scanned the sky. During the flight, they contemplated the mission. Thoughts of how to ram the jet without allowing it to hit a target were racing through their minds. Penney later reflected that the thought of failure was worse than the thought of a kamikaze mission. However, thanks to brave passengers willing to give all for their country, they didn't have to take out the airliner. Penney and Col. Sasseville were able to return to their families after learning United Airlines flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania.

God bless all who have served and are serving to ensure that we continue to live in the greatest country on earth.