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Ret. Lt. Col. Doug Jacobs, seen here with his wife, Paula, will be in Liberal Friday evening as a guest speaker at the Veteran's Appreciation Ceremony during the 5-State Fair. Jacobs is a graduate of Liberal High School Class of 1968 and served nearly 40 years in the military. Courtesy photo

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

Shortly after graduating from Liberal High School in 1968, Doug Jacobs began what would be a career of nearly 40 years in the U.S. military when he went to ROTC student battalion in Manhattan. He served in both the regular Army and the Army National Guard.

Jacobs was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1991, and in 2006, he retired from the Army National Guard. He still works closely with the military though, serving as manager and command historian of the Adjutant General's Department with duty at the Museum of the Kansas National Guard in Topeka.

Jacobs has been back to Liberal many times since 1968, and earlier this month, he returned to LHS as a part of the All School Class Reunion. On Friday, Aug. 2, Jacobs will once again return home to take part in one of the events celebrating the centennial of the Seward County Five State Fair.

The fair board will present the 2013 Five State Fair Veterans' Appreciation Ceremony that evening starting at 7 p.m. in front of the grandstands at the fairgrounds.

Jacobs said he was asked by fair board member Larry Phillips to speak at the event, and the veteran said he gladly accepted the chance to talk about his experiences.

"What an opportunity to come back to the community," Jacobs said.

Jacobs said he will talk about value and vets, and he said even though he currently resides in Topeka, he is a member of the Liberal American Legion post.

Jacobs added that although he came in to service during the Vietnam War, he did not serve in that war itself, but he is considered a Vietnam-era vet.

"Every soldier has his or her place or part to play," he said. "Not everyone goes to war. Each part makes up the whole."

Jacobs said one of the most important things he has done came when he served as a

peacekeeper in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 2002-2003.

"I was a small piece of the puzzle from Liberal, Kan.," he said.

Jacobs said he is looking forward to his presentation at the fair, but he has "no idea what to expect as far as numbers."

Jacobs has been involved with Liberal since going into the military. As part of the National Guard museum, he brought that museum's Mobile Museum exhibit to Liberal's Mid-America Air Museum, and he has taken part in one of the community's other well-known celebrations – International Pancake Day.

Jacobs said the Army has changed since he retired from service.

"I've lost friends from combat, but they sign up to protect and defend our country," he said. "That's what it means to be a vet."

Also part of the fair's Veterans' Appreciation Ceremony, the free show will include a motorcycle parade entrance by the Patriot Guard Riders, the American Legion Riders, HOG riders, law enforcement and emergency responders.

Color guards from the American Legion and Auxiliary and the National Guard will be on hand, as well a drum line from "That" Liberal Band.

There will be entertainers singing patriotic songs as well as other guest speakers, including active duty Army Staff Sgt. David Medina and local author Lidia Hook-Gray with a talk about the 100-year anniversary of the fair association and the military's ties to Liberal.

There will be a special ceremony honoring all area veterans and active duty military personnel and their families, and all are cordially invited to attend this free ceremony.

There will be two water misters for people to walk through to keep cool, iced down free bottles of water for everyone, a couple of shade canopies and the infield will be opened to those in attendance after the opening ceremony.

The public is urged to attend this show of support and honor this nation's heroes. The grandstands will open at 6:30 p.m. Friday. The show starts at 7.

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