



## VA Veterans Day Parade Fact Sheet

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### Laura Bringas Veteran, United States Marine Corps

It was service to country and a yearning for something different, and challenging, that brought Laura Bringas to serve in the United States Marine Corps.

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona she enlisted as a Marine in November of 2002. Bringas was initially stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina working in Communications. In 2005, she was deployed to Iraq, where she served in Ramadi and Fallujah. She initially



was assigned with the 10th Marines and was deployed with Headquarters Battalion Communications Company in Ramadi. From there she was sent to Fallujah with 8th Marines and they sent her out to work with the 5th Marines, 1/6, 3/4, and 1st Marines.

During her deployment, Bringas became what is called a “Lioness,” a member of a female search team conducting searches of Iraqi females, cars, and children who were coming into the city.

On June 23, 2005, Bringas was riding in the back of a vehicle when a suicide car bomb rammed into their truck and detonated; severely injuring her and several others. Five Marines and one Navy Seabee were killed. After the blast, Iraqi insurgents ambushed her unit. The defense against the ambush felt like it lasted some twenty minutes. The explosion left Bringas with second and third degree burns to her leg, hands, lower arm, back, face and ears and pieces of shrapnel in her face. Bringas was eventually flown to Germany for her injuries. She was later transferred to Brook Army Medical Center in Texas, where she underwent multiple surgeries, skin grafts, and physical therapy to treat her burns. The therapy lasted for about two years.

Bringas was awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Today, Bringas hopes to bring awareness about burn victims and their special needs. Often, people may overlook burn victims who are in intensive care units for far longer than other injuries. Due to their disfigurement they can receive less attention because of the severity of their wounds. In addition their extensive recovery time means their families leave everything behind to be with their loved ones 24/7.

She is now in her hometown of Phoenix, Arizona and is a patient at the Phoenix VA Health Care System. Bringas is a Maryvale High School graduate.

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*The Carl T. Hayden Veterans Affairs Medical Center, which is part of the Phoenix VA Health Care System, has been serving veterans in Maricopa County since 1951. We currently have 130 inpatient beds for medical and surgical patients, 80 beds for nursing home patients and 48 inpatient beds for mental health patients. We are honored to serve our veterans who have paid the price for us to enjoy our freedoms.*