



VA Veterans Day Parade Fact Sheet
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Aya Harrison **Unites States Air Force Veteran**

Aya Harrison is an Air Force veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom who was stationed at Camp Doha in Kuwait.

In January of 2003, she left Camp Doha, right before the war started which was troubling because she knew her unit was going to fight in Operation Iraqi Freedom and she would not be there.

But in July of 2005, Harrison did see battle. While stationed at Ali Air Force Base in Nasiriyah, Iraq, she witnessed two of the most traumatizing experiences of her life. The base was attacked by mortar fire at around 2 a.m. She and the other members of her unit were unarmed and took shelter under their beds for an extended amount of time. The base was attacked a second time, but this time it was different as the attacker was a worker on the base. These attacks shocked her to the point that she now suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Emotional Trauma. Both events are ones she will never forget, and she deals with the stressors from them every day.

Despite her emotional injuries, Aya Harrison moved forward immersing herself in school and work. She completed her Associates in Information Management, Bachelors in Business Management and her Masters in Business Administration (MBA). She was honorably discharged in November 2006 as an Air Force Staff Sergeant (E-5). While on active duty, Harrison recalls her time in the service as one of maturity.

One of the things Harrison remembers vividly is the way the Marines helped her unit. "Even though Iraq was a terrible experience, it was amazing to see how we were helping others."

Aya Harrison received the Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement medal with 1 Oak Leaf Cluster, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with Gold Border, Korean Defense Service Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Longevity Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Non Commissioned Officers Professional Military Education, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Overseas Short Tour Ribbon and the Air Force Training Ribbon. Currently, she works for Honeywell International in Tempe, Arizona. She is a Project Analyst for the Standard Missile 3 program which is assigned to Defense and Space.

Aya resides in Chandler, Arizona.



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.