

# Chaquetta Smith

## SSG, US Army, 2001 - 2017

I am Chaquetta Smith, born in Selma, Alabama, from Lowndes County, Alabama. I graduated from Central High in May 2001. I knew at a young age I wanted to join the Army. I entered the Army (active duty) in July 2001. Honestly, there is no particular reason why I joined the Army. I always knew at a young age I was going to join; it was always planned in my mind. Compared to the other branches, I joined the Army because I wanted to be a part of it.

During the Army, the training and school I completed was Advance Non-commissioned officer leaders' course, Basic Non-commissioned officer course, combat lifesaver course, Hazmat and safety course, standard army maintenance system enhanced practice, NATO Partner Operational Staff Officer Course, and Property Book Unit Supply course. The last promotion I received was to Staff Sergeant. One special recognition written about me was in "The Wire," an official publication of Joint Task Force Guantanamo.



I've been stationed in Texas, Virginia, Louisiana, Kansas and Germany, and Georgia throughout my Army career. During wartime, I have been deployed to Iraq twice, Afghanistan and Cuba.

During my service, I was an automated logistical specialist Non-commissioned officer, unit supply Non-commissioned officer, and battalion S4 Non-commissioned officer.

When it came to the family, we usually spent time on the phone talking and through letters during deployment time.

*"My experience in the Army didn't change me; it just made me realize how strong of a person I am."*

I medically retired from the Army on 16 October 2017 after 16 years and eight months of active Army duty. The experience didn't change me too much it just left me confused about what I was going to do next. While I was still in the service, I completed a college degree but moved back to Alabama, bought a home in Pike Road, and had my son Tristen. I'm currently using my 9/11 GI Bill and finishing another degree in Logistics/Supply Chain Management. Not sure if I readjusted to civilian life because I joined the Army at 17, so I didn't have a life. I was medically retired while on leave vacation preparing for my five deployments and was struck by a car while running with my dog. That causes me to spend 11 months in the hospital and three months in a coma. I currently live with severe TBI and rods in both legs and left arm for stability. I was told I would never walk again or live alone because I wouldn't be mentally stable enough to handle it.

For the younger generation, I would say learn as much as you can and attend college. From this story, I would like people to never give up on themselves.

**2021 Walk of Honor Brick Honoree**