



**SGT. DEBRA THOMAS
U.S. ARMY**

Debra Thomas entered the U.S. Army and retired after 21 years of service. During her years of service, she was first a Supply Officer and later a 1036 USAR Instructor. She was responsible for training recruits and officers alike for service in the U.S. Army Reserves.

Sgt. Thomas' first assignment was to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. In this assignment she was part of the first all-female unit to ever be trained at Fort Jackson. She remembers feeling her unit was under scrutiny as the first to be in this position and she knew she would be forced to do things she would never have thought of trying in any of her past life experiences. She did her very best and gave 100% effort. As a result, she was awarded honors, being named top student in her unit's training course. Only one-third of the all-female class made it through the entire course of training.

Debra went on to serve in her Instructor's position at Fort Lee, VA; Fort McCoy, Wisconsin; Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Benning, GA; Fort Bliss, TX; Fort Ord, CA; and Fort Indiantown Gap, PA. One training experience where she felt she was a benefit to the young men and women going to the war in the Middle East was during training exercises titled "Roving Sands" in Texas and Mexico. These military exercises trained men and women for action in desert warfare and arms/munitions.

Sgt. Thomas was the only child of Louis Howell and Betty Samuel of Hermitage. Sgt. Thomas spent most of 21-year career away from home. She feels blessed to have time now in retirement to spend time with her three (3) daughters - Nicole Hunt, Aliyah Hunt, and Kia Foster.

She looks back on her years in the U.S. Army as some of the most fulfilling years of her life and would recommend this career to any young man or woman who would like to give back to their country through service.