

2015 ARMY WARRIOR GAMES ATHLETE

NAME

Thomas Ayers

RANK

Staff Sergeant

STATUS

Veteran

FORMER OCCUPATION

92W (Water Treatment Specialist)

HOMETOWN

Cobb County, Georgia

CURRENT LOCATION

Clarksville, Tennessee

SCHOOL(S)

Not provided

INJURY OR ILLNESS

PTSD, Vertigo, Left ear bone implant

LOCATION AND DATE OF INJURY OR ILLNESS

Not specified

EVENT(S)

Archery, Cycling



Staff Sgt. Thomas Ayers grew up in Cobb County, Georgia and joined the Army in Chattanooga, Tennessee, May of 1997. His basic training and advanced individual training (AIT) was at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri as a 62E (Heavy Construction Equipment Operator). Ayers has served with the 65th Engineers Sappers as a 14T (PATRIOT Launching Station Enhanced

Operator) with the 1/7 Air Defense Artillery and deployed with the 32nd Air Defense Command for the initial push into Iraq in 2002-2003.

He was stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky to join 96th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB) and reclassified as a 92W (Water Treatment Specialist). Once he arrived, Ayers was sent to Iraq where he was in a mortar attack. While trying to get accountability of his Soldiers, a mortar hit near him that took him off his feet. The explosion scarred the inside of his left ear creating a tumor that ate away from his ear bone, which later had to be taken out and replaced with an implant. Staff Sgt. Ayers deployed again with 96th ASB to Afghanistan, before realizing the damaging effect that had been done on his ear.

Staff Sgt. Ayers got a job working with Wounded Warriors at the Warrior Transition Battalion, Fort Campbell, Kentucky. As time progressed, Ayers' ear got worse causing him vertigo and unable to do basic Soldier skill level tasks. Archery and cycling became his new passion along with the Wounded Warriors with whom he was working. He decided to try out for the Warrior Games at his local post and made it to regionals held at Fort Benning, Georgia. After doing so well, he made it to the Army Trials at Fort Bliss, Texas where he won Silver in recumbent cycling and Silver in recurve bow. Ayres received the Pride Award for motivating other athletes and showing a can do attitude. "I want nothing more than to honor my nation by showing that just because I have disability due to the war, I can continue to honor my country and inspire others to do the same," said Ayers. He is married with three boys and completed 18 years of service, before retiring due to medical issues.

