

SHOSHANA N. JOHNSON
FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN POW

On March 23, 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Shoshana Johnson was in a convoy that was ambushed in the city of an-Nasiriyah. Specialist Johnson received bullet wounds to her ankle, causing injuries to both legs. She and five other members of the 507th Maintenance Company were captured and taken Prisoners of War, making Johnson the first African American woman POW.

House raids conducted by US Marines in the city of Samarra, Iraq, resulted in the successful rescue of seven POWs on the morning of April 13. Three days later, Specialist Johnson, together with six former POWs, came back to a hero's welcome in the US with a cheering crowd of over 3,000 people.

Specialist Johnson retired from the Army on a Temporary Disability Honorable Discharge on December 12, 2003. Her awards and decorations include the US Army Service Ribbon, Army Commendation Ribbon, National Defense Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, and the Prisoner of War Medal. US Army officials identified Specialist Johnson as the first female POW of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the first black female POW in US war history.

Since her return to the United States, Specialist Johnson has received numerous awards and recognition for her courage, valor and service. She has been recognized with standing ovations from small groups to over 65,000 people at select events hosted by: the President of the Republic of Panama, The Congressional Hispanic and Black Caucuses, NAACP, Rainbow PUSH Coalition, Glamour, and McDonald's, and has appeared at college football games, NHL and MLB games, and most recently was the New York Mayor's Special Guest at Times Square on New Year's Eve.

Specialist Johnson also penned a memoir, *I'm Still Standing: From Captive US Soldier to Free Citizen – My Journey Home*, detailing her capture, rescue and the psychological aftermath of the ordeal. Calling Johnson “a true American hero,” Larry King describes *I'm Still Standing* as “a compelling, inspirational read.”

Specialist Johnson continually generates media attention and has participated in major national interviews with the Associated Press, Reuters, NPR, CNN, MSNBC, NBC, CBS, ABC, as well as foreign media outlets in the UK, Germany, France, Panama, Japan, China, Brazil, India, Russia, Canada, and many other countries around the world.

TOPICS

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