



From Kosovo to Keto: The story of Amy Monson's many missions

From the moment Amy Monson attended her cousin's wedding in sixth grade, she knew she found her calling to serve. The allure of the uniform led her to a 20-year career in the military, fueled by an interest in agriculture and followed by the launch of a business where she now serves a new crowd, coaching people who need help reaching their health goals.

From humble beginnings to a desire to serve

Monson grew up in a small farming community in rural Minnesota, and it was the Army that caught her eye from a young age. Before she was even eligible to enlist, she took the ASVAB (a military aptitude test given at schools) and qualified as a medic. Monson remembers when the Army recruiter came to talk to her parents. "My parents didn't say a word; I asked all the questions," she recalled. "He asked for a glass of water because no one had asked him that many questions before!"

When she turned 18, it was finally time to begin her service. For the rest of high school, she did drill on the weekends and was in the 682nd combat engineers in Willmar. The next summer was basic training in Fort Jackson, N.C., then AIT in Fort Sam Houston. Then, it was time to make it real.

Three tours, tea, and some chickens

Monson's first deployment was to Kosovo for one year, followed by a 22-month tour in Iraq where she was a medic and surgical tech in the busiest combat hospital in the theater. Feeling fatigued from combat, Monson switched to civil affairs and taught first aid to locals. She ended up spending time with the women in Iraq, trading tea for intel—an experience she calls life-saving for her mental health.

Then, she took some time off—but didn't stay away long. She took a job with the MN National Guard's family program, a component of Beyond the Yellow Ribbon, working with families of deployed or reintegrating service members.

In 2011, Monson was deployed to Afghanistan with the agriculture development team. She was one of 12 from Minnesota who went to help the locals with sustainable ag, including how and when to plant crops. She was also on the female engagement team, where

she was one of four who talked to the women there, taught basic hygiene, and started a chicken project (yes, literal chickens!). Monson spent time showing the Afghani women how to raise and care for the birds in order to sell the eggs.

Back to school and finding her family

A lifelong learner, Monson wanted to continue her education, so she used the money she earned from her service to enroll at NDSU. So, still in Afghanistan, she attended the first semester's classes online while actively deployed. It paid off, too, as she graduated in person with a bachelor's in general agriculture.

That's not all. In the final semester of her studies, she and her husband adopted three children. And it didn't stop there! Monson used the remainder of her military-earned money for school to pursue a master's in education, graduating in 2017.

Monson retired from the military as an E-7 (the ranking of Sergeant First Class) in 2018 after two full decades of service.

The launch of Mission: Keto

The same year her service ended, Monson began her next chapter. It started with the desire to tackle her struggle with weight and low energy levels. When she tried the ketogenic diet for herself, she found that not only did it work, but it didn't even feel like a diet. She used a coach to get started on her own health journey, then became a certified coach to inspire and serve others to do the same.

MISSION: KETO WITH COACH AMY

Monson calls her approach a strict one. "I teach people how to eat real food and get the processed stuff out," she said. "It connects with my education and ag background because it's farm to fork. I took a love of food, eating and keto, and wrapped it into one business."

"My military experience inspired my interest in ag, and my ag experience inspired my business"

When it comes to her coaching, Monson has a black-and-white attitude. "People come to me because they need accountability. They need someone to give it to them straight. That's probably why I have the retention I do."

The one thing the military didn't prepare her for? Asking why. Monson has learned to cultivate her own mindset training to see both the bigger picture and the reason behind the details.

So what on earth could be next for this ambitious go-getter? Monson is looking to expand and add new programs to address food addiction and understanding our brain's chemicals.

No matter what field Monson finds herself in, it's clear that she can always be found in service of others.

Find her online:

Missionketo.org
Instagram: @missionketo