



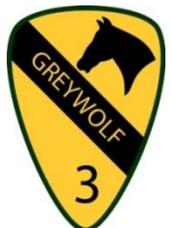
Lightning Weekly

The Enduring Teamwork in Northern Iraq

U.S. forces continue to partner and assist Iraqis throughout the country as Iraqis take on an increasing level of responsibility



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda, Task Force Lightning Public Affairs



FROM THE DESK OF 'LIGHTNING 6'

☆☆☆☆ *The support of our 'Ohana'* ☆☆☆☆

Having just returned from R&R leave, I have a heightened appreciation for the tremendous dedication and sacrifices of all our ohana back home and would like to pass on my sincere appreciation for all they are doing. Our families are our cornerstone which support our strength and success here in Iraq. I can't thank them enough for all they do to support us in this very difficult and important mission.

I also got to see how the Task Force operates from afar, and Task Force Lightning performed brilliantly. The hallmark of any good organization is how it adapts to change and how it operates when key individuals are absent, and it was great to see this unit flourish while its commander was away. I have complete faith and confidence in all that you do.

I also had the humbling honor of visiting some of our wounded Task Force Lightning Warrior brothers in arms at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. These warriors are incredible and tremendously inspiring. To a Soldier, they wanted nothing more than to heal and return to the fight.



Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr.

To each of us who knows these men and women, I would encourage you to stay in contact and keep them updated of what is going on in your units. Hearing the stories of those whose selfless sacrifices have built the platform that we now stand upon today, made me realize how blessed we are to be a part of such a noble and great profession. Theirs is a debt of gratitude that can not be measured and will not go unpaid. We are all honored and humbled by their service.

Each of these experiences strengthens our resolve in our operations together here in MND-N. Ours is an enormously important mission, as success will lead to increased security and prosperity for our Iraqi brethren. Yet, there will continue to be challenging times ahead of us. Al-Qaida insurgents and the Islamic State of Iraq remain a viable threat, degraded in ability, but still able to execute high profile attacks. Insurgents are increasingly recruiting children to launch attacks against us, our ISF partners, and the Iraqi people. These evil tactics harden our resolve to defeat this insurgency and to do what we can to insure that these children have a chance to grow up free from fear.

Every one of you here in MND-N is an important and valued member of this team – Task Force Lightning! Each and every one of you has an important story to tell. What you have experienced and are accomplishing is something your children and grandchildren will proudly read about in the history books years from now. Be proud of your work; you are making a difference. And be proud of the values that keep you and our Army the best in the world!



TROPIC LIGHTNING!

Maj. Gen. Robert L. Caslen Jr.
Commanding General
Task Force Lightning
Multi-National Division - North

'Mustang' Soldiers Provide Humanitarian Relief



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Pfc. Justin Naylor
2nd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq— Helping individuals in need can mean many different things.

Iraqi police from Dibbis, Iraq and Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, had an opportunity to help the residents of Qushquaya, Iraq, put food on their tables May 29 by distributing more than 100 bags of food in the form of tomatoes, beans and lentils to resident

“The residents of this village are all workers,” explain the village mukhtar, Ali Mahmood Sayeed. “Since they were given this food, they can now use the money they make to buy something else that they need.”

“These are the type of missions that are changing the way people view Coalition Forces,” said Pfc. Anthony Mariscal, a Houston native and a tanker mechanic with Co. C.

“We are trying to present a good impression to the younger generation,” Sgt. Jeremy Blister, a Pleasanton, Texas, native and an infantryman with Co. C.

This is the first time Qushquaya has received humanitarian assistance from security forces in nearly four years.

The residents hope that they will continue to help us in the future, said Sayeed.

“The youth don’t see politics; they see what is really happening,” said Blister. “This is how we are really helping Iraq.”

Although most of the residents did not speak much to the security forces, they were more than happy to flash a brief smile.

“They don’t really say thank you, but you can tell they are happy,” said Mariscal.



Sgt. Jose Lugo, a Killeen, Texas, native with Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, distributes a bag of food to a resident of Qushquaya, Iraq, May 29. (Photo by Pfc. Justin Naylor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Public Affairs)



Pfc. Anthony Mariscal, a Houston native and a tanker mechanic with Company C, Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, retrieves a bag of food from the back of his vehicle in the village of Qushquaya, Iraq, May 29. Mariscal, along with other Soldiers from his platoon, distributed more than 100 bags of food to residents of the village. (Photo by Pfc. Justin Naylor, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Public Affairs)



Capt. Jason Honeycutt (left) and 1st Lt. Gavin Mohrman (right) hand humanitarian aid gifts and supplies to children from a small village in the Sharqat District of Baiji, Iraq during a community outreach, June 2. Iraqi police and "Wolfhound" Soldiers of Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division delivered humanitarian supplies. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office)



Sharqat Communities Receive Helping Hand From Iraqi Police, 'Wolfhounds'



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Spc. Jazz Burney
3rd IBCT, 25th ID Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq – The problems of living on the outskirts of many cities in Iraq often surface when necessities become scarce—when water supplies are limited and food is not easily found. Families in these remote areas feel the negative impact the most.

Sharqat Iraqi police and Soldiers of Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, reached out to the remote villages of Al Khanuga and Msahly near Sharqat in the northern tip of Salah ad-Din province, June 1-2, in an effort to provide essential supplies and to foster the confidence of the local communities with their government.

During the mission, the "Wolfhounds" adopted the Arabic phrase "Masadat Yad" which means "helping hand" to symbolize the intent of the operation.

The overall concept is called "warm basing." Soldiers go out to the remote areas of the province to conduct humanitarian assistance missions for several days.

Once on the ground, Soldiers set up a temporary location and visit several villages in the local area.

Throughout those days, Iraqi and coalition forces check on the status of

families, schools and other important aspects in the remote communities.

The combined missions are intended to provide a vital link to connect the villages with the district and to the provincial leadership.

"Our primary focus was to reassure the families that they had not been forgotten, that we are truly concerned about their well being—that we are focusing on improving the lives of the families who live in the rural areas of Sharqat," said Capt. Jason Honeycutt, the company commander.

Many of the most distant villages have not been visited in some time, according to Honeycutt.

"The residents were extremely receptive and pleased to see us," said Sgt. 1st Class Brad Taylor, a "Wolfhound" platoon sergeant.

"The first village we stopped at, we met a local leader who told us that he hadn't been visited by Iraqi Security and Coalition forces for many months. We dropped off water, sugar, rice, chai tea and radios so the families could listen and receive information about our procedures on the road—the leader was also able to tell us the additional supplies his village needed," Taylor said.

From the warm-basing operations, Iraqi police and coalition forces listen to the concerns and gain an understanding of the immediate needs of the surrounding villages.

The common threads have been water projects and road repairs.

"They are having the roughest time with water due to various factors—the villages receive only two hours of water every two to four days due to the size of the pipes that pump the water, and the roads that lead to the river source are unusable," said Taylor.

"A lot of the villages have projects that are already underway—in one of the villages a school had just been built, but other primary and secondary schools needed additional repairs," added Taylor. "We just needed an opportunity to know where we could offer our help, we have it—now we can provide the assistance."

In the Sharqat villages, construction has also been brought to the forefront as a need of the people.

"A bridge was requested to be built in one of the villages because in the winter time one of the wadi [dry stream beds] fills up with water and creates a blockade separating one village from the other—the locals want this bridge to be built to give their children a direct way to get to school," said Honeycutt, noting that children may not attend school if they can't cross a bridge.



Mosul Police take operations to a whole new level



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Sgt. Christopher Kozloski
3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

MOSUL, Iraq — Iraqi Police gathered with their counterparts from the Iraqi National Police and Iraqi Army at the 3rd Iraqi Police Division's new operations center for a situational update briefing on the morning of May 26.

The IP realized they could leverage significant operational gains with their own operations center to conduct mission planning and tracking, while working with key personnel from the Iraqi Army and Iraqi National Police.



Iraqi Security Forces officers stand at attention as Major Gen. Muhamad Lateaf, commander of the 3rd Iraqi Police Division, enters the new operations center for the morning update briefing, May 26, 2009. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher Kozloski, 145th MPAD)

"The Iraqi Police recognize that they need to work together with the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi National Police. To do that, they needed a functional operations center from which they could conduct operations," said Sgt. 1st Class Gene Harding, intelligence team leader for the 3rd IP Div. National Police Transition Team.

The operations center is outfitted with work areas for liaisons from the Iraqi Army and Iraqi National Police as well as personnel for key functional areas such as intelligence and communications.

This has given Iraqi Security Forces a unified front for security in Mosul.

"Now that they have a place where they can come together, they are coming together," said Harding.

"They are able to plan and coordinate with each other because they are all right there together."



Maj. Gen. Muhamad, commander of the 3rd Iraqi Police Division, and Gen. Hassan, commander of the Ninewah Operations Center for the Iraqi National Police, listen to the information passed on during the morning update briefing at the new operations center in Mosul, May 26. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher Kozloski, 145th MPAD)

After reviewing a Coalition forces operations center, Maj. Gen. Muhamad Lateaf, commander of the 3rd IP Div., decided it was time to create the same type of atmosphere and further unite the security forces in Mosul.

Construction on the center began April 20, and 30 days later the project became a reality.

"We are relieved to have such an area to conduct operations and work hand-in-hand with our IA, INP, and Coalition forces counterparts," said Lateaf. "We were able to build the operations center through our joint efforts with the Coalition forces."

Since the center began full-scale operations on May 20, mission coordination has reaped rewards for the ISF. According to Harding, in the last week one mission resulted in the capture of a suspected insurgent and another



Lt. Col. Muhamad, an intelligence officer, discusses Mosul's significant events during the 3rd Iraqi Police Division morning update briefing, May 26. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Christopher Kozloski, 145th MPAD)

uncovered a large weapons cache. The IP's designed, coordinated key pieces, and built the operations center to their specifications.

"They've taken ownership of this since inception. This is 100 percent their operations center," said Harding. "They took ideas from one of our operations centers and made it their own."

Lateaf stated that the operations center will become pivotal for the Iraqi Security Forces as Coalition forces reposition in accordance with the security agreement. Now he has a base of operations, Lateaf is continually looking for ways to improve the operations center and the resources it provides.

"The operations center is not perfect yet, but we are developing it every day," said Lateaf. "Each day we will continue to improve on our operations and be more successful. This is just the beginning."



Joint security agreement for Mosul Dam



STORY BY
Spc. Daniel Nelson
Command Post North Public Affairs



MOSUL, Iraq -- Shared responsibility for security at Mosul Dam was the subject of recent talks between senior Iraqi Army and Kurdish Peshmerga officials, outside of Mosul, Iraq, May 29.

Maj. Gen. Hassan Karim, commander, Ninewa Operations Command, with Lt. Gen. Sherwan Abdulrahman, commander, Peshmerga forces and Brig. Gen. Robert Brown, deputy commanding general (support), Multi-National Division-North, resolved the local security concerns.

The Mosul dam remains a viable resource to Iraq and more specifically to Ninewa Province, and negotiations were successful as more definition was made to who would provide security for the dam.

According to Brown, the negotiations that have taken place during the past few days, with regards to the issue at the Mosul Dam, are a true example of what can be accomplished with open dialogue and communication has been set.

“Over the past few days, leaders from the Peshmerga and the Iraqi Army came together, in a joint effort, to ease tensions and develop a peaceful solution,” said Brown.

“Two days ago there was a temporary solution, but through a joint effort, and extensive communication, it has evolved into a permanent solution that could become the model for the rest of Iraq with regards to solving provincial issues in the disputed areas,” added Brown. “What has occurred is a true success.”



Maj. Gen. Hassan Karim, commander, Ninewa operations command, (right) is saluted by Iraqi Army officer of 5th brigade, 2nd IA division, during his visit to the new headquarters in Al Kazer, Iraq, May 28. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Nelson, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Command Post - North)

Iraqi Army opens new brigade headquarters



STORY BY
Spc. Daniel Nelson
Command Post North Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, MOSUL, Iraq-

Maj. Gen. Hassan Karim, commander, Ninewa operations command, traveled to Al Kazer, Iraq, for the opening of a new Iraqi Army brigade headquarters May 28.

For a mostly Arab IA, the new brigade is unique due to being made up of more than two-thirds Kurdish Soldiers and with a location close to the Kurdish Regional Government.

Upon arriving at the new headquarters Hassan was greeted by Brig. Gen. Natheer Asim Amin, commander 5th brigade, 2nd IA division, and his senior officers.

The group gathered to discuss operations of the new brigade before taking a tour of the new base facilities. In addition, the group talked about the joint efforts needed from both Kurds and Arabs to provide a safe and secure Iraq.

Hassan spoke about cooperation and coordination as

being keys to success in Iraq, and that they are all Iraqis and how they must work together for the future of their country.

Natheer added to the subject of a joint operation headquarters by stating that the base would be a bridge to strengthening the relationship between the Kurds and Arabs.

Furthermore, Hassan and Natheer thanked Brown and the other Soldiers for the Coalition support and funding in getting the headquarters built and operational.

“We’re very proud to have helped give you a new facility for your headquarters,” replied Brown.

Following their meeting, the group moved on to a large warehouse where the brigade’s Soldiers stood in formation awaiting Hassan’s arrival. Hassan spoke to them about their commitment to service and to their country.

The tour of the headquarters ended as the group gathered in the dining facility and enjoyed a meal that had been prepared by members of the brigade.

Assessing Operation: 'Glad Tidings of Benevolence II'



STORY BY
1st SBCT, 25th ID Public Affairs

DIYALA, Iraq – Iraqi and Coalition leadership came together May 23 to discuss current and future operations for the Diyala Province.

Iraqi Minister of Defence Abdul-Qadar Mohammad Jassim al-Mifarji along with Multi-National Force – Iraq Commander Gen. Raymond Odierno and Corps Commander Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby received an assessment briefing on the major operation being conducted in Diyala, "Glad Tidings of Benevolence II."

The operation began May 1 and has led to the detainment of 256 persons for various crimes and the discovery of multiple weapons caches according to Coalition forces.

Iraqi soldiers found a large weapons cache south of Baqubah May 21 which contained a variety of munitions.

The cache was discovered after Soldiers had found an additional 12 caches while clearing the towns of Al Bazania, Mula Eead, Ibrahim Al Mathkor, Al Naqib, Saed Mustafa, Al Bya'a, Saisbana, Al Gabaat, Old Saysabani, Kanbaru, Karim Al Nassir, Qaryat Al Hadaf, Ali Salem, Al Anbar, Nahar Ibrahim and Mahdi Alasward over the past two weeks.

During the major operation, both ISF and Peshmerga forces worked together to clear areas in Diyala and to bring humanitarian aid to the people of the region.

Approximately 100 families in the town of Horea received large bags of rice and other supplies during one of the many humanitarian aid missions that have taken place over the past three weeks throughout the province.

According to Col. Burt Thompson, commander of Coalition Forces in Diyala, "Glad Tidings of Benevolence II" has been a very successful operation.

With more than 26, 000 combined Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, some from outside the province, the ISF have cleared Diyala and are working hard to ensure they hold their gains.

"They have planned for and distributed humanitarian assistance packages and worked closely with Coalition Forces, the Provincial Reconstruction Team and the newly elected Government of Diyala on essential service and infrastructure improvement projects throughout the Province. We still have a lot of work to do in Diyala, but we are making gains every day," said Thompson.



SHARING IDEAS: IA/CF 'Think Tank' Promotes Discussion



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Spc. Jazz Burney
3rd IBCT, 25th ID Public Affairs

Top:

(From right to left) Michael Gordon, a New York Times journalist and U.S. Institute of Peace senior fellow; Anthony Cordesman, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Arleigh Burke Strategy Chair holder, and ABC TV national security analyst; and Col. Walter Piatt, commander, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and his interpreter listen to Iraqi Police Col. Fadhil, shift leader, Salah ad-Din Provincial Joint Coordination Center as he explains the functions of the PJCC, May 29. Gordon and Cordesman visited the province to gain a more in-depth understanding of the brigade's partnership with Iraqi Security forces and the provincial Government.

Bottom:

(From right to left) Col. Walter Piatt, commander, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division explains the brigade's partnership with Iraqi Security Forces and the Salah ad-Din provincial government to Michael Gordon, a New York Times journalist and U.S. Institute of Peace senior fellow and Emma Sky, the Multi-National Force-Iraq political advisor during a visit to the Provincial Joint Coordination Center May 29.

'Tropic Lightning' Soldiers celebrate Asian-Pacific American heritage



Command Sgt. Maj. Frank M. Leota, 25th Inf. Div., dances with Soldiers during the 25th Inf. Div. Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month celebration held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, May 24, near Tikrit, Iraq. According to custom, audience members threw dollar bills on stage to encourage the dancers. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Marvin L. Daniels, 982nd Combat Camera [ABN])

lighthouse of culture at each crossroads. Let your heritage shine and be the guiding light which paves the way for future generations.”

Male and female Soldiers performed traditional dances from island cultures such as: Hawaii, New Zealand, Samoa, Tahiti and Tonga.

Sgt. 1st Class Ituau Tunufa'i, assigned to Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Bde. Combat Team, 25th Inf. Div., and a native of Pago Pago, American Samoa, emceed the show.

Tunufa'i was one of many Task Force Lightning Soldiers who participated in the Pacific Island cultural event. Participants representing all ranks and backgrounds kept the 25th Inf. Div.'s "Tropic Lightning" spirit alive.

"Today, I think, this was the perfect show. Everyone danced with their heart," said Pfc. Melenaite Lokotui, a Seaside, Calif. resident assigned to 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Div., who performed a dance from her native Tonga.

"I was raised on the island, I came straight from the island to join the Army, and I still love my island. I still hold the culture and the tradition from the island," said Lokotui. "Today I am representing the islands here in Iraq."



STORY BY
Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda
Task Force Lightning Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq –

Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division and attached units took time from their deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to honor and celebrate Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month with a special exhibition of traditional dances from the Pacific Islands at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, May 24.

In addition to the dance exhibitions, attendees of the celebration received shell leis and a luau feast of Kahlua pork and other Hawaiian favorites.

Maj. Rizaldo Salvador, a logistics planner assigned to 25th Inf. Div., was the guest speaker for the celebration. Salvador, from

Cleveland, spoke about emigrating from the Philippines in 1978 at the age of three.

"This immigrant stands before you today as the fulfillment of a dream, which at times seemed improbable to overcome," Salvador said during his speech. "This immigrant is the product of our country, and endeavors to contribute back to our American society, and answers our nation's call to duty."

Salvador expanded on the theme of the month: "Leadership to meet the challenges of a changing world."

"Ultimately, the leadership challenge is within us. We must continue to embrace cultural diversity and maintain our cultural heritage and values. We must always remember the essence of who we are because this only strengthens the organizational culture," said Salvador. "Be the



LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK

PV2 JOHN KING
B Co, 1-12 CAV, 1CD
WALLINFORD, CT

PV2 King was manning a watch tower at Contingency Operating Post Ashura, when he observed indirect fire near the COP. Despite having never been involved in a combat situation, King demonstrated his training and competence by giving timely and accurate reports to the command center, which aided the Company Commander with his decision making and aided in the safety of the post's personnel. King exemplifies how capable and willing today's Soldiers can be.



IRAQI TRIVIA

Since 1921, there have been five different designs for the Flag of Iraq. Despite the changes over time, many elements of the flag have remained the same, namely the colors.

Following the Arab Revolt of 1918, Iraq, along with many other countries formerly comprising the Ottoman Empire, Iraq became an independent state, breaking free from the Ottoman Empire.

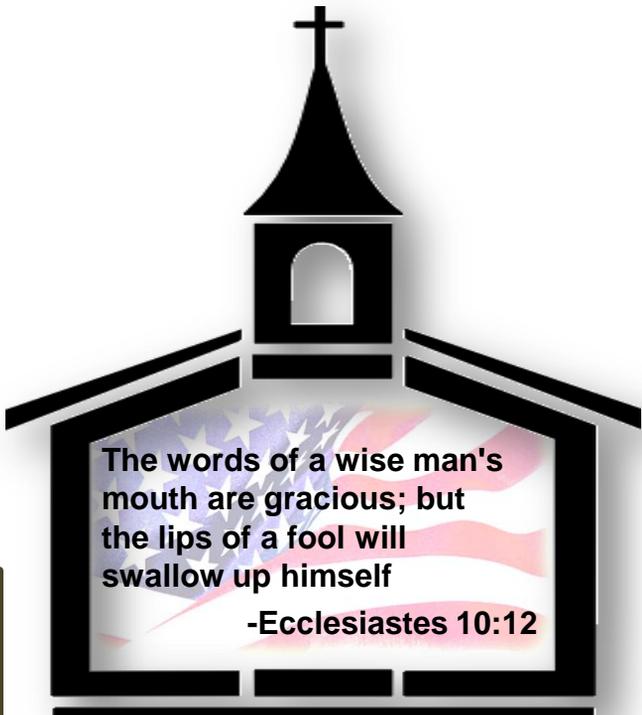
The colors red, black, green and white were chosen in honor of the leaders of the Arab Revolt, and the earliest incarnation of the flag displayed two seven-point stars, which represented the Kurds and the Arabs, Iraq's two majorities.

In 1961, following two other versions of the flag, the Iraqi Flag first began to display three green stars along with the black, white and green bands recognizable today. The stars represented a proposed union of Iraq, Egypt and Syria.

In 1991, under Saddam Hussein's regime, the flag changed once again, this time adding the arabic words "God is great," supposedly in his own handwriting. The text was altered to a more traditional Kufic script in 1994.

The current Flag of Iraq is a temporary design, flown until a permanent design can be approved by parliament approves the final design.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself

-Ecclesiastes 10:12

If you'd like to receive an electronic subscription of the *Lightning Weekly*, or have it go out to a family member, friend, loved one, or anyone else, send an e-mail request with the recipients' e-mail address to patrick.husted@25id.army.mil.

TASK FORCE LIGHTNING - THROUGH THE LENS



U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Jesus J. Aranda and Sgt. Kani Ronningen

TEAMWORK - Over the course of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Iraqi Security forces, the people of Iraq, and Coalition Forces have strengthened their considerable bond; a bond which can only be shared between teammates and friends. The Soldiers and military personnel serving Task Force Lightning thank their Iraqi hosts in Multi-National Division – North for the many months of dedicated collaboration and for the many months to come.

Do you have a great photo from your time serving OIF? We'd love to share it on "Through The Lens." Send your best photos to us at mndnpao@25id.army.mil

HEROES OF THE 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION



- Sgt. William Grant Fournier
- Co. M, 35th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division
- Died: 10 January, 1943
- Entered Service: Winterport, Maine
- Place of Action: Mount Austen, Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands
- Date of Action: 10 January, 1943



William G. Fournier

Medal of Honor Citation:

For gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty. As leader of a machinegun section charged with the protection of other battalion units, his group was attacked by a superior number of Japanese, his gunner killed, his assistant gunner wounded, and an adjoining guncrew put out of action. Ordered to withdraw from this hazardous position, Sgt. Fournier refused to retire but rushed forward to the idle gun and, with the aid of another soldier who joined him, held up the machinegun by the tripod to increase its field action. They opened fire and inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy. While so engaged both these gallant soldiers were killed, but their sturdy defensive was a decisive factor in the following success of the attacking battalion.

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