

Multi-National Division – North

Public Affairs Office, COB Speicher, Iraq
APO AE 09393



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE No. 091014-04
Oct. 14, 2009

PRESS ADVISORY

Tropic Lightning Soldiers return from Iraq

Multi-National Division – North PAO

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq — Nearly 1,000

Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division Headquarters will arrive in Hawaii from mid-October into early November after a year-long deployment to northern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As Task Force Lightning, the Division headquarters had control of more than 20,000 servicemembers who worked hand-in-hand with the Government of Iraq, provincial governments and local leaders in cities, towns and villages to protect citizens, enhance stability and foster growth within the four provinces of Northern Iraq.

Headquarters, 25th Inf. Div. deployed to Iraq at a time when Iraqi Security Forces were planning and executing more of the operations against al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The Division advised and assisted ISF units as they provided direct security for successful provincial elections in January, and continued to prepare them to

take over responsibility for security in the cities, which occurred June 30 in accordance with the Security Agreement between Iraq and the United States.

Attack levels dropped in Northern Iraq throughout the year, with September 2009 having approximately 150 fewer attacks than December 2008, the first month of the deployment. Violence in the city of Mosul, often called the last remaining stronghold of the insurgency, also decreased at a similar rate during that time. The decrease in violent attacks is seen as a positive indicator of the strong partnership between Task Force Lightning units and the Iraqi Security Forces.

Reconciliation between Iraq's various ethnic and religious groups was a top priority for the command. TF Lightning transferred the responsibility of more than 35,000 mostly-Sunni Sons of Iraq to the Government of Iraq, which has a Shi'a majority. The Sons of Iraq were funded by the United States to help defeat al-Qaida terrorist networks throughout Iraq, and their continuing placement within the Gol and the ISF will go a long way in maintaining stability in the country after U.S. Forces depart.

TF Lightning also made great strides in helping its Iraqi partners rebuild the infrastructure and expand the economy in the northern provinces. The Division oversaw reconstruction projects of bridges, roads and schools, worked with farmers to improve agricultural conditions, revitalized key shopping markets and provided grants to small-business owners. These measures helped to create nearly 230,000 new jobs in Northern Iraq.

Headquarters, 25th Inf. Div. will uncase its unit colors to officially mark the return of the Tropic Lightning Division to Hawaii at a redeployment ceremony on Schofield Barracks, Nov. 19. Media wishing to attend the redeployment ceremony, or cover the

earlier arrival of Tropic Lightning Soldiers, should inquire with Loran Doane, USAG-HI media relations chief, at cell 317-847-2222.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – NORTH PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE AT: MNDNPAO@25ID.ARMY.MIL OR DSN 318-849-0089. TO CALL DSN FROM THE U.S., DIAL 504-391-7900, ENTER '95' AND THE 10- DIGIT DSN NUMBER.

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