

## **Multi-National Division – North**

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### **Prayer luncheon spotlights spiritual fitness**

**Story and Photos By**  
**Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs**

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq** – What’s your purpose and how can you achieve excellence in those things you do while maintaining a healthy life balance?

Soldiers, civilians and other attendees were asked to consider these weighty questions at the final Task Force Lightning Prayer Luncheon, sponsored by the 25th Infantry Division and hosted by the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade at the South Dining Facility, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Oct. 11.

According to Chaplain (Maj.) Linda Norlien, brigade chaplain, 25th CAB, the 25th Inf. Div. has rotated different speakers for a monthly prayer luncheon since their arrival in Iraq last year. This month’s featured speaker was Brig. Gen. James C. Nixon, the deputy commanding general of operations for Multi-National Division - North. Attendees were also treated to a scripture reading and a musical rendition of “Amazing Grace.”

“The reason we have these events – the reason we pray -- is because God is gracious and answers prayers,” said Chaplain Norlien. “One of the reasons we call people together to a prayer luncheon is because there is a sense of camaraderie and community among those praying together for common things.

“We are not alone. We are united,” Norlien added.

Chaplain (Capt.) Tony Cech, battalion chaplain, 209th Aviation Support Battalion, 25th CAB, elaborated on the value of hosting spiritual fitness events for Soldiers.

“Prayer luncheons are a good thing for many reasons,” explained Cech. “They enable us to connect to others who are part of the Army community and who are believers. But also, these events make us think vertically.

“We tend to think ‘horizontally,’ and by that I mean we focus on immediate things, those with whom we interact and the mission,” Cech continued. “Events like this, when they talk about our purpose, remind us God has a higher purpose for us, and help us to think about life’s big picture and reflect on the fact that we are all spiritual beings.

“Another benefit is to hear the testimony of what God has done and is doing in the lives of others. It’s quite a unique experience to have someone of General Nixon’s stature share his faith and tell people, ‘This is what God is doing for me. Consider these things as you live your life,’” Cech said.

Among the things that the event’s keynote speaker emphasized was for Soldiers to refine their purpose in life by reflecting on life’s turning points -- the events in life that change its course of events.

“The reality is that you all lead purposeful lives,” said Nixon. “And you should all get great fulfillment in that knowledge.

“But, how do we refine our purpose based upon the gifts that God has given us for the short time we have in this life?,” he asked rhetorically. “One way to refine your purpose is through life’s turning points.”

For Nixon, God is involved in those turning points, and one may not understand the intentions behind those turning points without the benefit of time and reflection. However, Nixon said trying to understand those moments, connecting that understanding to our beliefs and then adjusting our lives as we move forward, then we refine our purpose.

The general’s message was not lost on Soldiers in attendance.

“I hope they continue to have these events,” said Pfc. John Henneberry, aviation operation specialist, HHC, 25th CAB. “General Nixon really made an impact on me, especially his emphasis on spiritual fitness.

“I definitely thought of exercising that aspect of my life more. Just like in the gym. You try and build and work muscles to get stronger. It’s the same with your faith,” Henneberry concluded.



### 20091011-A-0840A-001

Soldiers, civilians and other attendees were asked to consider their purpose in life and to focus on maintaining a healthy life balance at the final Task Force Lightning Prayer Luncheon, sponsored by the 25th Infantry Division and hosted by the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, at the South Dining Facility, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Oct. 11. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs)



### 20091011-A-0840A-002

Spc. Jason Thompson, unit armorer and nuclear, biological chemical specialist, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, enjoys lunch with friends and reviews a program at the final Task Force Lightning Prayer Luncheon, sponsored by the 25th Infantry Division and hosted by the 25th CAB at the South Dining Facility, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Oct. 11. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Bde. Public Affairs)



**20091011-A-0840A-003**

Brig. Gen. James C. Nixon, deputy commanding general for operations, Multi-National Division – North, was the guest speaker at the final Task Force Lightning Prayer Luncheon, sponsored by the 25th Infantry Division and hosted by the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade at the South Dining Facility, Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, Oct. 11. Nixon invited attendees to refine their purpose and focus their energy on achieving success and excellence in their daily lives. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs)



**20091011-A-0840A-004**

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