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Soldier from Alhambra dies from combat wounds in Iraq

By: Associated Press

FORT LEWIS, Wash. -- A Fort Lewis-based soldier from California has died of wounds he received in a gunfight in Balad, Iraq, the Department of Defense reported Friday.

Staff Sgt. Darrell R. Griffin Jr., 36, of Alhambra, died Wednesday from wounds suffered when his unit came in contact with small arms fire during combat operations.

Griffin, who was married, was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, at this post south of Tacoma.

The infantryman joined the military in April 1999, serving in the Army National Guard before reporting to Fort Lewis in July 2001, said Joseph Hitt, a spokesman at the post.

Griffin first served in Iraq from October 2004 to September 2005 while assigned to the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, another Stryker team that last year was renamed the 2nd Cavalry Regiment and transferred to Germany.

He was assigned to the 3rd Brigade in March 2006.

More than 90 soldiers from Fort Lewis have died in the Iraq war since it began in March 2003.