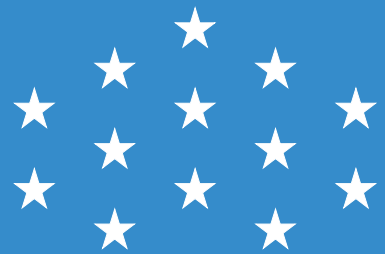




Capt. Florent A. Groberg

MEDAL OF HONOR

Afghanistan



Capt. Florent A. Groberg, U.S. Army, retired, was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Barack Obama during a ceremony held 12 November 2015 at the White House. Groberg received the military's highest award for valor for his actions on 8 August 2012 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

On that day, then 1st Lt. Groberg was commanding a personal security detachment designated to protect twenty-eight coalition and Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel, including two brigade commanders, two battalion commanders, a brigade command sergeant major, a battalion command sergeant major, and an ANA battalion commander. Groberg was leading the security formation on foot from Forward Operating Base Fiaz to the provincial governor's compound in Asadabad, Kunar.

As the patrol neared a small bridge, Groberg noticed a man walking backwards toward the patrol. Thinking that the man looked suspicious, Groberg yelled at him, and the man abruptly spun around and approached the patrol. Groberg and his radio telephone operator, Sgt. Andrew J. Mahoney, moved to cut him off. As they pushed the man back away from the patrol, Groberg noticed a bulge under the man's clothing and realized it was an explosive vest. The two soldiers physically drove the man away from the patrol and onto the ground. When the man hit the ground, his vest exploded, sending lethal ball bearings in every direction. The blast threw the two soldiers fifteen feet and left them both with severe injuries.

A second suicide bomber, approaching from a different direction, also detonated his vest, possibly prematurely due to the first explosion. The second blast killed four others: brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin J. Griffin, Maj. Thomas E. Kennedy, Air Force Maj. Walter D. Gray, and Foreign Service officer Ragaei Abdelfattah from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

During the Medal of Honor ceremony, President Obama said Groberg's actions were "extraordinary," and



(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)
Sgt. Andrew Mahoney and then 1st Lt. Groberg in Asadabad, Afghanistan, circa August 2012.

that Groberg "had the instincts and the courage to do what was needed."

The president also spoke of the four men who were killed. "These four men believed in America," he said. "They dedicated their lives to our country. They died serving it. Their families—loving wives and children, parents and siblings—bear that sacrifice most of all."

Groberg was inducted into the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes the day after the Medal of Honor ceremony. During the induction ceremony, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter praised Groberg and the other members of the personal security detachment, citing many of them by name for their actions on 8 August 2012.

Carter said of Groberg, "At the moment of greatest testing, he made the most selfless and courageous choice of all: to run toward the direction of danger; to willingly put his life on the line for the sake of his brothers."

Mahoney was also recognized for his actions during the attack. He was awarded the Silver Star Medal during a ceremony on 22 April 2013 at Fort Carson, Colorado, and was honored as the Army Soldier of the Year during the 2014 United Service Organizations (USO) Gala on 17 October 2014 in Washington, D.C.

Groberg has medically retired from the Army, but continues to serve as a Department of Defense civilian. Mahoney still serves as a soldier.

Left: Capt. Florent Groberg, U.S. Army, retired, speaks at the White House Medal of Honor Ceremony, 12 November 2015.

(Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense PAO)