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Officials: 'No Evidence' Ties Dead Soldiers to Mahmudiyah Crimes

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 4, 2006 – Citing media reports suggesting a possible connection between three U.S. soldiers killed in June and the alleged rape of an Iraqi girl and murder of the girl and her family in March, military officials in Iraq today issued a statement saying “no evidence” connects the dead soldiers to the incident.

“Past articles could be read to imply that the three deceased soldiers were somehow involved in the alleged crimes,” Multinational Corps Iraq officials said in the statement.

Spc. David Babineau, Pfc. Thomas Tucker and Pfc. Kristian Menchaca – all assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division – were manning a checkpoint that came under attack June 16. Babineau died at the scene, and Tucker and Menchaca went missing. Their bodies were found three days later.

Six current and former soldiers from the same unit are facing criminal charges in connection with the alleged March 12 rape and murder incident in the southern Iraq town of Mahmudiyah.

“The criminal investigation into the crimes committed against the Iraqi family in Mahmudiyah is still ongoing, and comment on the investigation would be inappropriate,” the MNC-I statement said. “Thus far, however, no evidence has been discovered implicating Babineau, Tucker or Menchaca in any criminal involvement with the Mahmudiyah incident.”

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