

U.S. charges 3 soldiers in Iraq slaying

by UPI

BAGHDAD - A third U.S. soldier from Alaska has been charged in the deaths of three Iraqi civilians and trying to cover it up, the military announced in Baghdad.

A statement said the killings happened between April and June near Iskandariya, south of Baghdad. The soldiers have been detained and are awaiting trial, the military said.

Sgt. Evan Vela of the First Battalion, 501st Infantry, of the 25th Infantry Division, based at Fort Richardson, Alaska, is charged with one count of premeditated murder, placing a weapon with the body to make it appear the victim was a combatant, obstruction of justice and making a false statement, the military said.

Last week, the military announced similar arrests and charges against Staff Sgt. Michael Hensley and Spc. Jorge Sandoval Jr., both in the same unit as Vela, The New York Times reported.

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