

Iraqi testimony suspect in Marine case

by UPI

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. -- Iraqi witness testimony against one of the U.S. Marines accused of killing civilians isn't credible, a hearing officer at Camp Pendleton, Calif., said. Hearing officer Marine Lt. Col. Paul Ware recommended murder charges be dropped against Lance Cpl. Justin Sharratt in the fatal shooting of three Iraqi brothers in the town of Haditha in November 2005, The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday. Ware, a lawyer, recommended Sharratt be given immunity and required to testify at hearings for other defendants. He wrote that Iraqi witness testimony was contradictory and that giving it credence, could "set a dangerous precedent that, in my opinion, may encourage others to bear false witness against Marines as a tactic to erode public support of the Marine Corps and the U.S. mission in Iraq," the Times reported. "Even more dangerous is the potential that a Marine may hesitate at the critical moment when facing the enemy," Ware wrote. Lt. Gen. James Mattis, commanding general of the Marine Forces Central Command, will review the recommendation, the report said.

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