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## SHAME OF ABUSE BY BRIT TROOPS

May 1 2004

Rogue British troops batter Iraqis in mockery of bid to win over people

By Paul Byrne

A HOODED Iraqi captive is beaten by British soldiers before being thrown from a moving truck and left to die.

The prisoner, aged 18-20, begged for mercy as he was battered with rifle butts and batons in the head and groin, was kicked, stamped and urinated on, and had a gun barrel forced into his mouth.

After an EIGHT-HOUR ordeal, he was left barely conscious and close to death. Bleeding and vomiting and with a broken jaw and missing teeth, he was driven from a Basra camp and hurled off the truck. No one knows if he lived or died.



*URINATED ON: A British soldier urinates on an Iraqi prisoner in a vile display of abuse. The captive was beaten and hurled from a moving truck. Army chiefs are investigating.*

The shocking pictures on this page were handed to us by one of the attackers and a colleague. We have agreed to protect their identities as they fear reprisals.

Last night, their damning testimony was in the hands of appalled ministers and Army chiefs who pledged an urgent investigation.

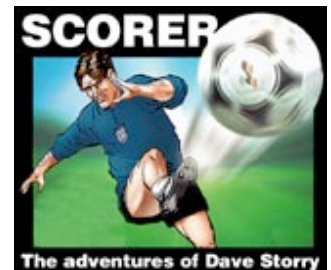
Chief of the General Staff General Sir Michael Jackson said: "If this is proven, the perpetrators are not fit to wear the Queen's uniform. They have besmirched the good name of the Army and its honour."

No 10 said: "The Prime Minister fully endorses the general's statement."

The outrage, which emerged the day after US troops were pictured torturing Iraqi prisoners of war, makes a mockery of the Army's attempts to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.



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*GUN TO HEAD: The terrified suspect cowers as a gun is placed at his head - then the rifle barrel was forced into his mouth*

Army chiefs believe it was an isolated incident involving a few rogue troops. But, it is claimed, officers turned a blind eye. One of the soldiers said: "Basically this guy was dying as he couldn't take any more. An officer came down. It was 'Get rid of him - I haven't seen him'. The paperwork gets ripped. So they threw him out, still with a bag on his head."

Weeks after the pictures were taken, a captive was allegedly beaten to death in custody by men from the same Queen's Lancashire Regiment. It is also alleged a video was found of prisoners being thrown off a bridge.

Soldier A told how the young victim was hauled in suspected of stealing from the docks.

He said: "You pick on a man and go for him. Straightaway he gets a beating, a couple of punches and kicks to put him down. Then he was dragged to the back of the vehicle."

Immediately a sandbag was placed over the man's head and his hands tied behind his back.

Soldier A said:

As we took him back he was getting a beating. He was hit with batons on the knees, fingers, toes, elbows, and head.

You normally try to leave off the face until you're in camp. If you pull up with black eyes and bleeding faces you could be in s\*\*t.

"So it's body shots - scaring him, saying 'We're going to kill you'. A lot of them cry and p\*\*\* themselves.

Because it was so hot we put him in the back of a four- tonner truck which has a canopy over it. That's where the photos were taken. Lads were taking turns giving him a right going over, smashing him in the face with weapons and stamping on him. We had him for about eight hours.



*BLEEDING: Blood seeps through the mask of battered suspect*

You could see blood coming out early from the first 'digs'. He was p\*\*\*\*d on and there was spew.

"We took his mask off to give him some water and let him have a rest for 10 minutes. He could only speak a few words, pleading 'No, mister' . No, mister'.

I did less than the others. But I joined in. Me and my mate calmed down. Then two lads come on and it starts again.

"He was missing teeth. All his mouth was bleeding and his nose was all over the place. He couldn't talk, his jaw was out. He's had a good few hours of a kicking. He was on his way to being killed. There's only so much you can take.

After the officer allegedly told the attackers to get rid of the suspect he was driven off.

Soldier A said: "The lads said they took him back to the dock and threw him off the back of a moving vehicle. They'd have freed his hands, but he'd still be hooded. He'd done nothing, really. I felt sorry for him. I'm not emotional about it, but I knew it was wrong."

Referring to the second alleged beating in custody - said to have taken place in September - Soldier B said: "It was only a matter of time.



*BUTT IN GROIN: A rifle is cruelly jabbed in the young man's groin as his eight-hour nightmare goes on*

"We had one who fought back. I thought 'Don't do that', it's the worst thing you can do. He got such a kicking. You could hear your mate's boots hitting this lad's spine.

"One of the lads broke his wrist on a prisoner's head. Another nearly broke his foot, kicking him. We're not helping ourselves out here. We're never going to get the Iraqis on our side. We're fighting a losing war."

Soldier B claimed after the alleged September beating troops were told to destroy incriminating evidence.

He said: "We got a warning, saying the Military Police had found a video of people throwing prisoners off a bridge. It wasn't 'Don't do it' or 'Stop it'. It was 'Get rid of it.' "

The death is being probed. At least one soldier is expected to be charged with manslaughter.

The two infantrymen claim abuse has started because Iraqi police are powerless to process suspects.

Soldier B said: "There's no point taking them to the police station because they're released within 20 minutes. The coppers don't want any comeback and let them go. All we do is teach them a lesson our way.

"You're knackered and you don't want to be going to a police station and doing statements, just for them to be released. Give them a kicking, then it's done and dusted.

"A lot of the younger ones are worse. It's as though they've something to prove. You've got a gun and you're the law. You can make people do whatever you want."

Both men fear the situation is worsening, with UK troops now seen as the enemy, rather than liberators.

One said: "I can't believe it has taken the Iraqis so long to fight back. If it had been me or my family, I'd have retaliated straightaway.

"They've just got f\*\*\*\*d around so much. You can't go in now, and say 'Right, let's forget about what has happened and start again'.

"We're struggling now. There are too many people against us."

The MoD confirmed eight cases of alleged mistreatment of Iraqis by British personnel are being investigated by the army's Special Investigations Branch. A spokesman said: "All allegations will be investigated - and every soldier

knows it."

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