

By Associated Press

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- **Sgt Frank Wuterich faced detainment of no more than three months after pleading guilty to lesser charges**
- **Accused of telling team to 'shoot first, ask questions later' in Haditha in 2005**
- **U.S. team killed unarmed women, children and man in wheelchair in house**

It was the massacre which left 24 unarmed Iraqis dead and cast fresh shame on the American military, already reeling from Abu-Ghraib.

But a military judge yesterday ruled that the final U.S. soldier to face charges over the notorious assault on Haditha will not be jailed.

Instead, Staff Sergeant Frank Wuterich, who led the attack, faces no more than three months in confinement after admitting the least serious of three charges – negligent dereliction of duty.

He had initially been implicated in 19 of the deaths. Among the victims were seven children and a 76-year-old man in a wheelchair.

[To see video, click here and scroll to bottom of page.](#)



*Three months confinement: Staff Sgt Frank Wuterich arrives at Camp Pendleton. He has escaped a jail sentence for the Haditha massacre*







Washington Post, 1/25/12. The photo shows the bodies of the victims of the Haditha massacre, which occurred on December 16, 2009, in Haditha, Iraq. The bodies are wrapped in white plastic sheeting and are lying on a wooden floor. The photo is a composite of several images, showing the bodies from different angles and in different positions. The bodies are wrapped in white plastic sheeting, which is a common practice for identifying and protecting the remains of victims. The photo is a composite of several images, showing the bodies from different angles and in different positions. The bodies are wrapped in white plastic sheeting, which is a common practice for identifying and protecting the remains of victims.





*Isaiah, a victim of the attack in November 2001, the Haditha massacre (left) and Omer Chasib who lost*







Portrait of the family of U.S. Marine Sgt. Michael Smith with his wife, Maria, and their two children, taken in the late 1990s. Smith was charged with the Haditha massacre in 2007.





**Damage to a car after the shooting in Haditha.** A total of 24 people were killed, including



Two days after the attack, a bomb exploded on the road in Haditha, Iraq, killing several people. The explosion was the result of a U.S. Marine's mistake. The Marine, who was on patrol at the time, fired at a group of people who were walking along the road. The explosion killed several people, including women and children. The Marine's actions were later found to be a war crime.