

Quest for truth in Haditha

The official version of an alleged massacre of Iraqi civilians by U.S. troops last November differs widely from that of eyewitnesses. Survivors say U.S. Marines burst into three homes in Haditha, gunning down occupants including three children, seven women and an elderly man in a wheelchair



Haditha: Farming town in Anbar province – heartland of Sunni Arab insurgency seeking to topple U.S.-backed Shia-led government



■ **Nov 19, 2005:** Shortly after sunrise, roadside bomb kills U.S. Marine and injures two others during patrol in ***Al-Subhani*** neighbourhood of Haditha. In following hours 24 Iraqis are killed

■ **Nov 20:** U.S. military says bomb killed a Marine and 15 Iraqi civilians – ***“Iraqi Army soldiers and Marines returned fire killing eight insurgents”***

■ **Jan 2006:** Video of bodies and houses where they died is passed to ***Time*** magazine. Military dismisses it as ***al-Qaeda*** propaganda

■ **Feb 14:** Deputy U.S. commander in Iraq starts investigation

■ **Mar 27:** ***Time*** breaks story. Military confirms that civilians were shot, not killed by bomb, Criminal investigation begins and ***President Bush*** is briefed

■ **Apr:** Three Marine officers are relieved of command

■ **May:** U.S. officer confirms that \$38,000 was paid out in compensation to families of dead

■ **May 31:** Bush says in his first comment on affair: ***“If ... laws were broken there will be punishment”***

■ **Jun 3-4:** Three-month probe by ***Naval Criminal Investigative Service*** due to be delivered to Pentagon