



By Allah I will Revenge Your death

World

Kuwaiti gunmen kill 1 Marine in training

By Dave Moniz
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Two gunmen killed one Marine and wounded another Tuesday during a training exercise on an island near Kuwait. The attack prompted concerns that U.S. forces in the region might be targeted as the military readies for a possible war in Iraq.

Marines quickly returned fire and killed the assailants, who were dressed in civilian clothes, officials said. The military confiscated three AK-47 assault rifles from a vehicle driven by the gunmen.

The Pentagon has not released the names of the dead or injured Marines. The wounded Marine suffered non-life threatening injuries to his arm and is expected to recover.

Kuwait's Interior Ministry identified the attackers as Anas al-Kandari, born in 1981, and Jassem al-Hajiri, born in 1976. Both are said to be Ku-

waiti citizens. An interior ministry official, speaking to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity, described them as fundamentalist Muslims. "The Ministry announces that this is a terrorist act," it said in a statement. "It will not allow anyone to undermine the country's security."

U.S. intelligence has not determined whether the attackers had any terrorist links, an intelligence official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The U.S. Navy said 31 civilians were taken into custody as potential witnesses.

The killing was believed to be the first of its kind at U.S. forces training in the Persian Gulf region. In 1986, a truck bomb killed 19 U.S. airmen at the Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia, by

those troops were assigned to a unit based there. Two years ago this Saturday, suicide bombers attacked the Navy destroyer USS Cole in Yemen, killing 17 sailors.

Pentagon officials were trying to figure out how two gunmen were able to approach a group of heavily armed Marines on Failaka Island and shoot them during an exercise involving the use of live ammunition.

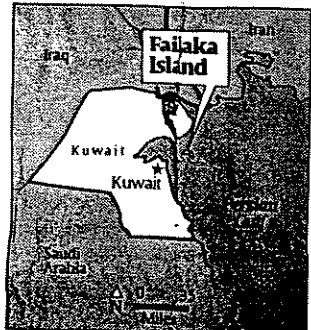
Troops from the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based at Camp Pendleton, Calif., were on the island training with the Kuwaiti military.

It was unclear whether the attack was a prelude to further violence against U.S. forces in the region. Lt. Col. Dave Lapan, a Pentagon spokesman, said he did not believe the incident will affect the completion of the month-long Eager Mace exercise involving more than 1,000 Marines and sailors.

Kuwait is generally seen as among the safest countries for U.S. troops in the Middle East, though several Kuwaitis have been linked to Osama bin Laden. Two years ago, Kuwaiti authorities said they arrested three Kuwaitis who had plotted attacks on Camp Doha, a Kuwaiti army base used by U.S. forces.

The U.S. military has maintained a force of at least 20,000 troops in the region since the 1991 Gulf War, including about 5,000 Air Force personnel in Saudi Arabia. The troops are there to deter Iraq from threatening its neighbors and to enforce United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

Steve Baker, a retired Navy admiral who is now a defense analyst, said it's unlikely the attack will change U.S. defensive tactics. "We are already at extremely high states of alert in Kuwait and elsewhere."



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Contributing: Wire reports