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DEFEND OUR MARINES

MURTHA STICKS TO HADITHA SLANDER, DENIES FACTS IN EXONERATIONS

Credits self as caring and wise

Congressman John Murtha (D-PA) sat down with the editors of the Uniontown *Herald-Standard* yesterday and was asked about the defamation lawsuit filed against by former Marine lance corporal, Justin Sharratt.

In Haditha, Sharratt and SSgt Frank Wuterich faced armed insurgents in a dwelling labeled house 4 by investigators. The dead Iraqis in house 4 were all military-aged males. AK-47s along with Jordanian passports were recovered from the room. Forensic evidence disputed allegations that the four dead men had been executed.

Sharratt had been falsely accused, and was exonerated on August 9, 2007.

A statement by General James Mattis, after charges were dismissed, underscores the former lance corporal's innocence...

"The events of November 19, 2005 have been exhaustively reviewed by Marine, Army, and Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigators....

"With the dismissal of these charges LCpl Sharratt may fairly conclude that he did his best to live up to the standards, followed by U.S. fighting men throughout our many wars, in the face of life or death decisions made in a matter of seconds in combat. And as he has always remained cloaked in the presumption of innocence, with this dismissal of charges, he remains in the eyes of the law – and in my eyes – innocent."

Regardless, Murtha continues to ignore the facts of Haditha. The editors of the [Uniontown Herald-Standard report](#)...

Murtha declined to comment on the recent lawsuit filed by U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Justin Sharratt of Canonsburg that alleges the congressman had denied him of his constitutional rights of the presumption of innocence and of due process. The complaint's allegations stem from Murtha's public statements, prior to the trial in the 2006 incident that members of Sharratt's unit had killed "innocent civilians in cold blood."

A military court has since exonerated Sharratt and six others. An eighth Marine is awaiting trial **However, he said that 24 people were killed and no weapons were found at the Haditha site, which, to him, indicated there was "no security threat" to the Marine unit.**

"Since I spoke out, the procedures have been changed substantially," he said. "I had a number of criticisms about what was going on in Iraq at the time.

"We were breaking down doors and we shouldn't be. If we are going to win this battle in Iraq, we're going to have to win the



REP. JOHN MURTHA (D), PENNSYLVANIA:
There was no IED that killed these innocent people. Our troops overreacted because of the pressure on them, and they killed innocent civilians in cold blood. And that's what the report is going to tell.

hearts and minds of the people."

Meanwhile, Justin Sharratt awaits a day in court to clear his name--even after his exoneration in a court of law.

David Allender

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