

# CAMP PENNSYLVANIA

**Situation:** An Army Sergeant kills 2 and wounds 14 at Camp Pennsylvania.

On 23 March 2003, US Army Sergeant Hasan Karim Akbar, a member of the 36th Engineering Battalion, used grenades and a rifle to attack fellow Service Members at Camp Pennsylvania, Kuwait. The attack left two officers dead and 14 wounded.



Akbar was reportedly upset by a reprimand for insubordination and the decision that he would not be allowed to accompany his unit into Iraq. His religious beliefs also played a part in his decision to carry out the attack. Akbar, a convert to Islam at a young age, developed a radical and distorted interpretation of Islam. In a diary recovered after the attack, Akbar had written several anti-American statements including, "My life will not be complete unless America is destroyed," and "You guys are coming into our countries, and you're going to rape our women and kill our children."

The attack at Camp Pennsylvania demonstrates that an internal threat to DOD personnel does exist. Do not be paranoid, but always be alert to the "insider threat."

Sergeant Akbar was born "Mark Fidel Kools" and raised in Watts, Los Angeles. His mother married a Muslim man, converted to Islam, and changed her son's name to Hasan Karim Akbar. He attended the University of California at Davis over a 9 year period and graduated with aeronautical and mechanical engineering degrees in 1997.



His diaries reflected both a sense of persecution and murderous thoughts over a period of several years. Examples include:

- 1992: "I made a promise that if I am not able to achieve success because of some Caucasians, I will kill as many of them as possible."
- 1993: "I do not like the military. They have too much control over people's lives. I suppose I am just anti-government.... A Muslim should see himself as a Muslim only. His loyalty should be to Islam only."
- 1996: "Anyone who stands in front of me shall be considered the enemy and dealt with accordingly."

- 1996: "Destroying America was my plan as a child, and as a juvenile and in college. Destroying America is my greatest goal."

In 1998 he joined the US Army.

The "insider threat" presents a challenge for early detection and prevention. However, pre-attack indicators may be present such as statements that US policy and authority is illegitimate and threats toward coworkers. Inform authorities if you observe inappropriate attitudes in others.



Sergeant Akbar deployed with the 101st Airborne Division to Camp Pennsylvania, Kuwait, a rear base camp for the upcoming invasion into Iraq. While there, he was reprimanded for insubordination and told he would not be allowed to accompany the unit into Iraq. In February 2003, Sergeant Akbar wrote in his diary:

"I suppose they want to punk me or just humiliate me. Perhaps they feel that I will not do anything about that. They are right about that. I am not going to do anything about it as long as I stay here. But as soon as I am in Iraq, I am going to try and kill as many of them as possible."

In the early hours of 23 March 2003, Sergeant Akbar stole grenades from an ammunition storage area and cut power to the generator that powered the installation's lights. He then threw at least one grenade into a tent housing the 1st Brigade's command center and opened fire with an M4 rifle.

Air Force Major Gregory Stone was killed by grenade shrapnel and Army Captain Christopher Seifert died when shot in the back. Fourteen other Service Members were wounded.

If an attack occurs, seek cover immediately. In a grenade attack, lie flat on the floor with your feet towards the attack since shrapnel tends to rise from the point of detonation. In a small arms attack, it is best to crouch but not lie on the floor since ricochets tend to hug the floor.

For his crimes, Hasan Karim Akbar was tried at Fort Bragg, NC. On 21 April 2005, Akbar was found guilty on two counts of premeditated murder and three counts of attempted premeditated murder. One week later a military jury sentenced Akbar to death. In November 2006, the Commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps upheld the death sentence. The case is now before the US Army Court of Appeals. If the appeal fails, the execution will be carried out by lethal injection.

Sergeant Akbar is the first member of the US Armed Forces to be charged with the murder of a fellow soldier during wartime since the end of the Vietnam era.

