



US soldier found guilty of murder

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A US soldier who said he shot dead an unarmed and wounded Iraqi civilian to "put him out of his misery" was found guilty of murder at a court martial in Baghdad today.

Staff Sergeant Johnny Horne was convicted of the unpremeditated murder of a severely wounded Iraqi civilian in Baghdad's deprived Sadr City district on August 18.

A pre-trial agreement limits sentencing to 10 years, without which the charge carried a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

The murder of Kassim Hassan took place when US soldiers spotted a garbage truck apparently dropping homemade bombs in Sadr City, the capital's most populous Shi'ite Muslim neighbourhood.

The soldiers started shooting at the truck, which caught fire, and a severely wounded Hassan pulled himself out of the truck and fell to the ground, according to previous testimony.

"When I found him, I came to the conclusion that he needed to be put out of his misery," Horne said.

"I fired a shot into his head and his attempts to breathe ceased."

Judge Colonel Stephanie Browne asked Horne what his intention was when he fired the shot, to which Horne replied: "I wanted to end his suffering, it was my opinion that he could not be helped".

Horne also was found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder with two other soldiers, Staff Sergeant Cardenas Alban and Second Lieutenant Erick Anderson, who have yet to stand trial.

- AFP

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