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Associated Press

Afghan policeman kills 9 sleeping fellow officers

By AMIR SHAH

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An Afghan policeman killed nine of his fellow officers as they lay sleeping in a village in the eastern Paktika province on Friday, police said, blaming the attack on the Taliban.

Provincial police chief Dawlat Khan Zadran said the incident took place in Yayakhil town of Yayakhil district.

Bowal Khan, chief of Yayakhil district, identified the gunman as Asadullah, who goes by one name. He said the gunman was assigned to a small command post when he woke up at 3 a.m. for guard duty. He then used his assault rifle to kill the nine men sleeping inside the post, took their weapons and piled them in a pickup truck.

According to Khan, Asadullah then sped away in the truck.

Khan said the victims included one of his brothers and the commander of the post, identified as Mohammad Ramazan. He said two of the dead were Ramazan's sons.

The motive for the killing was not known, but police in the area blamed the Taliban for the attack. Paktika is a stronghold of the Haqqani network, a Pakistani-based group with ties to the Taliban and al-Qaida. Although they mostly attack U.S.-led coalition forces, they have often carried out assaults and bombings against the Afghan army and police.

"This man is a coward. What he did is part of the Taliban conspiracy," Khan said.

Khan and Zadran said the killer's two brothers were being held for questioning.

The village police is also known as the Afghan Local Police, or ALP. It is a village-level force that provides security in areas where the Afghan army and police cannot.

The ALP is trained by the U.S. troops but commanded and run by the Afghan government and police.

In an unrelated incident, a motorcycle bomb parked by the side of a road exploded on Friday and killed an Afghan police officer and wounded another in Sangin district of southwest Helmand province, police said. They added that another police officer was shot and killed late Thursday outside his house in the capital of Helmand.

NATO said Friday that two of its service members were killed in southern Afghanistan. They said one died in a roadside bomb explosion on Friday and the other one in an insurgent attack that took place Thursday. NATO did not disclose any other details.

So far this year, 88 international troops have been killed in Afghanistan.