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Florida said at fault in race riot 71 years ago 

User Rating: ●●●●● / 1

Poor      Best

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No German version

Tallahassee/Racism/General

Florida said at fault in race riot 71 years ago =  
by Mark Weisenmiller =

Tallahassee, Dec 23 dpa - Nearly 71 years ago, a rumor swept a crowd of New Years revelers in a small coastal Florida hamlet that a black man had beaten a white woman. Enraged, the drunken and angry whites drove hundreds of blacks from the town in one of the most violent race riots in Florida's history.

The mob never found the man, but their rampage virtually destroyed the small town of Rosewood and unleashed a week of racial violence in which whites terrorized blacks at night while law enforcement

authorities stood by and did nothing.

Rosewood and the hatred it symbolizes are commemorated only by a green-and-white highway marker along state route 24 where the town stood. But a new report by historians at several Florida universities has determined that the state could have prevented the carnage, and legislators in the state Assembly have proposed paying 6 million dollars to descendents of Rosewood's victims and building a memorial in the wilderness where the blacks had mad-e their homes to escape persecution by whites.

The historians determined that at least six blacks and two whites perished in the riots during the first week of 1923, though various reports estimated that as few as two or as many as 150 of the town's 350 residents died.

Rosewood had a history of racial tension. It was the regional headquarters of the Ku Klux Klan, the white organization responsible for lynching and terrorizing blacks throughout the U.S. South in the late 1800s and early 1900s. And in the years before the New Year riot, more than a dozen blacks were murdered, many by lynching's.

Despite this history, the state authorities failed to stem the violence that broke out on New Year's Day, 1923. While whites shot at blacks during the nights, the state's governor in Tallahassee accepted the word of the local sheriff that the situation was under control and left town for a hunting trip.

At a press conference this week, Arnett Doctor, a descendent of a Rosewood survivor, said he hopes the historians' report and the possible reparations send a message that the mob's behavior was illegal and immoral.

dpa mw/Weisenmiller dm/McIntyre

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Elementary school children successfully build computer



User Rating: ○○○○○ / 0

Poor ○ ○ ○ ○ ● Best

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No German version

Palm Harbor/Computer/General

Elementary school children successfully build computer =

Palm Harbor, December 17 dpa - After a weekend spent correcting last minute problems on a group project, gifted students at a Palm Harbor school recently claimed what could be a "first": the successful building of a working computer by primary school children

The computer was a 486 IBM-compatible, featuring a windows software system. Working in teams, the children - ranging in age from 6 to 11 - assembled its disc drives, hard drives, keyboard, memory chips and other accessories in just a little more than five hours.

The idea was David Gussow's, a volunteer and father of one of the students who worked on the project.

"I read about a school in California that (unsuccessfully) a/tempted this," he said. "I gays a copy of the story to Bob Silverman (a teacher of intellectually gifted children at Sutherland Elementary) and away we went", .

Silverman, with parent volunteers who were in the computer industry, obtained computer 6omponents from manufacturers, set defined tasks for the 75 children involved and then supervised the protect.

"It was fun - everybody IH my class looked forward to it, " said Brian Pafundi, an 11 year-old who took part "we all saw it as a challenge."•

Before starting, students took apart a computer to become familiar with its internal layout and parent John Torro explained its intricacies.

"It was really hard to get control of this (the concept of .building a computer) until we got down and dirty and got our hands in the guts of the computer," commented g-year-old Matthew Moss.

The students~were~broken down Into four teams. Each team worked for one hour on their assembly tasks, one team, for example, built the hard drive and another installed it into the shell of the computer using screwdrivers.

Silverman said "Some people really didn't think that it could be done. Up until the last minutes'; we had people around here saying that We couldn't do it.

The only big problem was setting up the windows function and getting the monitor to work

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properly. But once that was finished in overtime the project was completed.

dpa mw/Mark Weisenmiller rt/Tomkins

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witness sentenced for part in burning of tourist

User Rating:      / 0

Poor      Best

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No German version

Tampa/Burning/General

witness sentenced for part in burning of tourist =

Tampa, Florida, Oct 21 dpa - A man who took part in the kidnapping of a black tourist who was later set alight was sentenced in U.S. federal court Wednesday to six and a half years in prison.

"All I can really do is apologize," Jeffrey Pellett, 18, said before sentencing. "I Wish I could change what happened."

Pellett, who had pleaded guilty to a federal charge of aiding and abetting an armed carjack, with two others abducted a black tourist from a Tampa area shopping centre New York New~ Year's Day,

The tourist, a 1-year-old Charles Wilson, was driven to a remote field where Pellitt's accomplices doused him with gasoline and set him of fire. .

The victim lived, but suffered burns to over 40 percent of his body. .

Pellett became a witness for the prosecutor in the Florida state trial of Charles Rourk, Sa, and 2z-year-old Mark Kohut, who will be sentenced Friday .for attempted murder,

Pellett had earlier pleaded guilty to state charges in connection with the immolation itself and could be sentenced Op to 25 years in state prison.

When the verdict was read, Pellett was crying uncontrollably and struggled with federal marshals when they wouldn't let him speak to his mother before being led away.

dpa ft/Weisenmiller

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Gulf:War veterans win battle over toxic exposure 

User Rating:      / 0

Poor      Best

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No German version

USA/Veterans/General

Gulf:War veterans win battle over toxic exposure

By Mark Weisenmiller -

Lake Wales, Florida, August 13 dpa - A group of Florida--based citizen-soldiers who fought in the Persian Gulf War are engaged in a new battle - the daily uncertainty of what lies ahead for them and their-families as they struggle against war-related illnesses bearing unknown prognoses.

The soldiers, who served in the Florida National Guard's 325 Maintenance Company, have been plagued with excessive joint pain, head-splitting migraine headaches, shortness of breath, short-term memory loss and general fatigue as a result of working with toxic paint.

Many of the 125 people have trouble working in civilian life because of their health difficulties, adding to the strain of the home lives.

A support group of the soldiers and their families help ease the feeling of isolation they feel. But only after a two-year battle with the U.S. government did Washington acknowledge their plight and approve disability benefits.

"It was very frustrating," says sergeant George Strait, a former platoon leader of the 325th. "It (the illness) didn't get the attention of anybody at the Pentagon.

"We couldn't get anybody to do anything for us. We felt like we were in a no-win situation,"

The unit of part-time soldiers, called to active duty during the Gulf War, painted military jeeps and trucks at a base in Saudi Arabia. Just a month after their arrival there unit officers began to notice that a disproportionate number of soldiers were missing morning roll-call because of illness.

An on-site investigation concluded that the paint used to camouflage the vehicles contained a toxin that destroyed the body's breathing process, but the Pentagon, VA and other federal agencies later rejected the findings.

dpa Weisenmiller/rt

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Lake Wales/Veterans/General Gulf War veterans ...

User Rating: ○○○○○○ / 0

Poor ○ ○ ○ ○ ● Best

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Lake Wales/Veterans/General

Gulf War veterans ... two =

The malady suffered is apparently not life-threatening, but has broken down their bodies' immune system, causing ongoing poor health. It is not known if the effects of the poisoning will be long-term,

like those caused by Agent Orange, a defoliant used by the military during the Vietnam War.

The veterans repeatedly complained to the military about their illness and the rejection of the initial investigation. The letter-writing campaign eventually bore fruit.

The VA, after seeing the volume of letters, began a more thorough investigation and on August 3 ruled in their favor, clearing the way for the disability checks.

"It (the disability checks) helps the men's and women's morale," said Barbara Booth, a wife of one of the soldiers.

"They were being treated like they were trying to get

something for nothing, not like they were victims. It was, up to the men and women to prove that the paint was causing their problems."

The checks have not yet been received by the veterans, but they are on their way - a small measure of certainty to those who worry about what the future may bring.

dpa Mark Weisenmiller/rt

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