

Army Quietly Buries Dead Soldiers in Maiduguri

● *34 others allegedly killed last week by Boko Haram*

Iyobosa Uwugiaren in Abuja

The Nigerian Army yesterday quietly buried several dead soldiers at the military cemetery in Maiduguri yesterday.

The soldiers, THISDAY gathered, are believed to be the 105 that Boko Haram killed from the 157 Battalion during a fierce gun battle with Nigerian troops at Gundunbali, Borno State last week.

A military source in Maiduguri said the bodies of the men were brought to "Maiduguri Monday evening".

The military authorities, in an attempt to keep the news

away from the public, had denied that soldiers were killed or missing, describing the report as "a fabrication of the imagination of those sympathetic to Boko Haram ways of life".

The army spokesman in Maiduguri, Colonel Tukur Ismail Gusau, had said Boko Haram attacked the location of the 157 Battalion, but they were "subsequently repelled by the gallant troops of the unit", adding that the unit's commanding officer remained in contact with his Brigade Commander.

Similarly, the Director of Army Public Relations at the

Defence Headquarters (DHQ) in Abuja, Col. Sani Usman, described the report of the missing soldiers as a smear campaign against the Nigerian military.

Online new website, Premium Times, had reported that 105 soldiers attached to the 157 Battalion were killed after they came under a penetrating attack from Boko Haram in Gundunbali last Wednesday.

The terrorists were reported to have captured a T-72 tank in the attack as well as several artillery weapons from the unit.

The source, who confirmed

the burial of the 105 missing soldiers yesterday, said about 34 men of the 118 Battalion were also killed by the insurgents last week.

"These deaths mark a low point in the war against the terrorists," the source stated yesterday.

But Col. Usman informed THISDAY yesterday that the burial that took place was not that of the purported 105 dead or missing soldiers, insisting that they had since rejoined their units in Borno.

He clarified that the burial of the soldiers close to the theatre of war was a routine military procedure.



Buratai