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War in Borno: 50 terrorists killed: Colonel, DPO die in battle

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By Ndahi Marama, Maiduguri

About 12 soldiers including a colonel, the Divisional Police Officer, DPO, three policemen and four civilians were feared killed at the weekend when about 200 terrorists operating in many Toyota Hilux vehicles attacked Damboa Local Government Area of Borno State.

The structure housing the Divisional Police Headquarters in the area, markets, houses and vehicles were also destroyed during the encounter between the terrorists and the armed forces.

No fewer than 50 of the terrorists were, however, said to have been killed when ground troops and Air Force fighter jets engaged the attackers, sources said.

The incident took place on Friday at about 5 pm when the insurgents, who, according to sources, came with two anti aircraft guns mounted on two of their pick-up vans, different types of improvised explosive devices, EIDs, rocket-propelled launchers, stormed the town in what the sources described as a revenge mission targeted at the 195 Battalion of the 7 Division, Nigerian Army, and police formations.

This came on a day two suicide bombers, at a checkpoint, manned by members of the Civilian JTF, killed five members of the vigilante youths, injuring many of them including passersby.

Some terrorists also laid ambush along the busy Maiduguri-Mafa-Dikwa Road killing about 15 passengers and motorists.

The Friday attack was the second time Boko Haram insurgents had attempted to attack a military base in Damboa town, 85 kilometers south of Maiduguri, Borno State capital, but ended up with heavy casualty.



File: Officers of the Joint Military Task Force (JTF) patrolling in Maiduguri in a sweeping offensive against Boko Haram militants.

AFP PHOTO/

According to a Sunday Vanguard source, the Boko Haram insurgents seemed to be on a reprisal mission, hours after an Air Force jet bombarded their base in Yajiwa and Alagarno areas of Damboa local government area killing scores of the insurgents.

The source narrated: “It was a successful air raid carried out by the Air Force in conjunction with the ground troops of the Nigeria Army from 7 Division. During the air raid that took place in the evening, the Boko Haram suffered heavy casualty as dozens of them were killed. Angered by the devastation they suffered, the insurgents decided to mobilise in full force with an attempt to attack the base in Damboa, but, unknown to them, the soldiers there were fully aware and alert about possible reprisal attack. And when they eventually surfaced on Friday, in over ten vehicles, the soldiers took them by surprise and engaged them in a fierce shoot out that claimed over 50 of them, unfortunately we also lost over 10 of our officers and men in the encounter”.

A senior local government officer from Damboa, who claimed to have witnessed the deadly attack but survived and had to relocate to Maiduguri told Sunday Vanguard in Maiduguri that Damboa council area came under attack, by suspected Boko Haram terrorists on Friday evening.

His words: “Some gunmen suspected to be insurgents in military uniform stormed Damboa where they exchanged gun fire with the military and policemen. During the encounter, many of the terrorists were killed.

But, unfortunately, the insurgents succeeded in killing 12 soldiers including the Commanding Officer, Colonel Abubakar Chamba . They also killed about three policemen and a DPO, four civilians, before setting ablaze the police station in the town, the newly renovated Damboa market among other government structures.

“As I am talking to you now, myself and the Secretary of the Council have relocated to Maiduguri, as the place is no longer safe for us”.

The response to a text message to the cell phone of the Director, Defence Information, Major General Chris Olukolade, at press time on the army officer and soldiers killed in the Friday incident, said: “OK, I have seen your message, give me a while please. I will get back to you”.

However, the Borno State Police Command Public Relations Officer, DSP Gideon Jubrin, confirmed the attack on