

Contributed by Kevin Brent

## 500 sailors trash town in Portugal

By Tony Smith  
The Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal — A bar fight exploded into a brawling rampage involving hundreds of American and British seamen that left cars overturned, windows smashed and more than 100 people injured, police said Thursday.

Police said they arrested 121 U.S. and British sailors after an estimated 500 seamen and scores of police brawled Wednesday night along Lisbon's seedy, bar-dotted dockside.

The sailors were released to their ships Thursday morning and a British aircraft carrier cut short a courtesy call and left for home because of the fighting.

U.S. Embassy officials insisted that most if not all injuries were caused by police. Portuguese police said sailors fought among themselves, then turned on

Please see 500 on page 10A

Continued from 1A

officers trying to break up the melees.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Pete Williams said 142 U.S. sailors were treated for injuries. He said 40 sailors had to be hospitalized for injuries such as damaged spleens or possible concussions.

Williams said the brawl was being investigated but that there were several versions of what he called "a very confused situation."

Portuguese police said four police officers and three civilians were among the injured.

Paulino Cardoso, duty officer at Lisbon's security police, said the melee broke out after three black American seamen attacked a white U.S. sailor at the Passport Bar in the gaudy, neon-lighted Cais do Sodre area. That account could not be confirmed.

A Pentagon official who asked not to be identified said the injured included officers, a chaplain and intelligence officers who were trying to calm a confrontation that arose when police tried to clear an area of sailors following some type of disturbance.

The official said there were reports that indicated police were responsible for "severe indiscriminate beatings."

U.S. Embassy information officer Arthur Liefkowitz said: "All the 142 injuries treated seem to have resulted from clashes with the police."

A Lisbon public security police force spokesman, Lt. Pereira Chumbinho, did not deny force was used. But he said sailors "maltreated" the first two police crews to arrive on the scene, then surrounded a third vehicle.

"Then we had to send in three more cars and more forces, but it is sure that the sailors were fighting among themselves and then turned on the police," he said.

Fighting spread from bar to nightclub along the narrow, cobbled streets of the riverside area about 9 p.m., Cardoso said.

He said British seamen from the aircraft carrier Ark Royal, which arrived in Lisbon on Wednesday on a five-day goodwill visit, joined in the brawling.

Ark Royal Commander Christopher Thomas said only a few British sailors had been "caught up" in the fighting.

"There is no evidence of fighting between American and British sailors... and I am confident my men were not involved in any drunkenness, damage or trouble of any kind,"

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Ark Royal Capt. Jehn Brigstocke later told reporters.

Cardoso said British sailors had been arrested with the Americans.

Shore leave was canceled from the Ark Royal and aboard the U.S. assault craft Nassau, Barnstable County and Shreveport.

The U.S. ships were in Lisbon during a break from NATO exercises off the Portuguese coast and slated to leave Oct. 20.

Brigstocke said the Ark Royal was cutting short its courtesy call to Lisbon and departed today for Portsmouth, England.

"It was very confused — there were police cars driving one way, and sailors running the other, but we had no trouble," said an employee at the nearby Hatari Bar, who asked not to be identified.

"It was just like Hill Street Blues," said a shopkeeper.

Cars were turned over, windows were smashed and about 40 sailors were arrested when they stormed the local police station, Portuguese police said.