

On 12 February 2004, a team of officers, directed by Major General Antonio Taguba, conducted the following interview. Major General Taguba was appointed as an Investigating Officer under the provisions of Army Regulation 15-6, by Lieutenant General David D. McKiernan, Commanding General of the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC), to look into allegations of maltreatment of detainees, detainee escapes and accountability lapses, at Abu Ghraib, also known as the Baghdad Central Confinement Facility (BCCF). The panel also inquired into training, standards, employment, command policies, and internal policies, concerning the detainees held at Abu Ghraib prison. Finally, the panel looked into the command climate and the command and supervisory presence

The following persons were present:

COL [REDACTED], MP, CFLCC – PMO, Interviewer
LTC [REDACTED], JA, CFLCC – SJA, Interviewer
LTC [REDACTED], 705th MP Battalion, Interviewer
SSG [REDACTED], HC, 320th MP Battalion, Interviewee

The interview is summarized as follows:

My name is Staff [REDACTED]. My social security number is [REDACTED]. I am currently in 372nd Military Police Company out of Fort Meade, MA. I am Reserve. My unit currently works at the Abu Ghraib Prison. I have served with this unit 2 years. I am Squad Leader in the unit and I have been in that position since September 2003.

My role as a Squad Leader and Assistant NCOIC is to keep accountability of inmates, maintain account board, receive new prisoners, the in processing and out processing of inmates, recording information to log into system, report prison security and maintenance problems, and all other transactions regarding prisoners.

I have personnel that work for me at the prison. I worked out of the office and my personnel worked at various sites throughout the prison. I have personnel that worked on the night shift back in December who are involved in the allegations of prisoner abuse. The personnel are Staff Sergeant [REDACTED], Specialist [REDACTED], Specialist [REDACTED], and Specialist [REDACTED]. The guards post are the Military Intelligence Hold, Medical Section, and Common Criminals Section.

The unit had a general overall SOP, but not a specific SOP regarding handling and disciplining inmates. We have had the Geneva Convention briefing before we left home station back in April 2003. Military Intelligence had separate policies regarding treatment of prisoners.

If Military Intelligence gave us orders to perform certain acts (sleep deprivation, playing radio all night, have inmate stand up all night) towards inmates, I requested that it be put in writing. If we were ever questioned why were doing certain acts to the inmates we would always have the letter from Military Intelligence. We would interrupt the

performed acts if the inmate had immediate needs in regards to the Geneva Convention Act. The letters we received from Military Intelligence regarding acts performed on inmates can be found at their Tier 1A section, SGT [REDACTED] is the point of contact.

I work in a different section now; I was moved due to the investigation. I didn't have a problem being moved, because if I were under investigation I'd rather not work in that same section. I feel if I were still working that section my judgment would be affected, because I would always be thinking about the investigation.

I am not familiar with the ROE interrogation card, I've believe I seen a briefing or memorandum, but never trained on it. Before this mission we did a Law and Order mission in which we did a great job, we are a combat support unit we have done peacekeeping in Bosnia, so we have had experience in maintaining law and order. We were put in the rear to handle this mission, but we are not corrections officers. We haven't had any corrections training. That is still no excuses for what happened.

I was not around when the allegations happened. I was very offended to here my name mentioned in the allegation. I've never conducted myself in that manner or even been involved in anything that comes close to this. When I was involved in the shooting incident, when the prisoner stopped shooting, I stopped shooting. I then made sure a Medivac was called in for the inmate that I had wounded.

We have worked hard to maintain our prison. We have a couple of incident reports we have pulled so you look at to see what we have been doing to make the prison a better place. The biggest problem we have with the prison is the CPA, they have hired 5 or 6 Iraqi corrections officers who after investigation were found out to be Fedayeen. We have Fedayeen working in the jail cells, that's a hiring and screening issue. The hired Iraqi corrections officers have no training, not even the basics. I have stressed the importance of searching inmates properly; it's a daily process that we have to go through. CPA has never once come down to visit the prison. We have asked for support as for as equipment, uniforms, and cleaning supplies. I had to go out on the economy to buy cleaning supplies for the first three months.

The ICO's were never trained. Most of them are corrupt. We had to detain 41 of them during the shooting incident. We had to change everything around after the incident. They don't communicate, they don't have accountability, it just a mess.

We have had some support from our higher. We had an issue with inmates not going to court, we brought it up with JAG, specifically CPT [REDACTED] and then a lot of the inmates started to see the judge and started getting released. Then we had another breakdown of people not moving, not getting to court, I think it was due to units leaving, transport issues around November through December, but then it got fixed.

I don't know the Battalion Commander's involvement in the process of getting, supplies, equipment, and support. I just know when we asked for supplies we didn't get them. I

don't know what was done or what wasn't done, so it wouldn't be fair for me to comment. It would be something my OIC would know more about.

Our chain of command did come to visit, I would see MAJ [REDACTED] Chief [REDACTED] COL [REDACTED], almost daily. There were also Military Intelligence officers that would come down.

We used our dogs to sniff out grenades; we had reports of grenades getting in the facility. Then after the shooting we had them search for bombs. Some of the inmates would tell us about grenades getting into the hard site. The dogs were also used as a show of force. I did hear about an interpreter getting bit, I think MI used the dogs for interviewing purposes.

When MAJ [REDACTED] came to the facility I would be busy. He would come to talk to us, but he would usually talk with the platoon sergeants.

Our correction training was basically OJT since day one. We have three personnel who worked corrections before who are Staff Sergeant [REDACTED], Corporal [REDACTED], and Staff Sergeant [REDACTED]. I never worked in corrections. We referred to SSG [REDACTED] a lot he was very knowledgeable.

There were no SOP's from higher or we never seen them. We basically got guidance from the unit we took over for. We were just picking up from the way that they did things.

We knew things were not supposed to be the way they were, like having juveniles and females in the military holds. We also fought all the time with MI and Battalion about common criminals being in the military hold areas. We were stuck in the middle. That battle went on for months, we knew there were guidelines, but it was above our pay grades we just did as we were told.

MAJ [REDACTED] would say we run the prison not MI. I knew that you should not have common criminals in the MI hold, because the common criminals would soon be released and they could tell who they saw in the MI holds. I would advise MAJ Dinenna of this. There was room in the facility to properly categorize the inmates.

We worked for Battalion the Battalion owned the facility. I don't know how MI fitted in to the scheme; I didn't know the chain of authority. It was a unique situation we had; the MI Colonel who we took orders from and we had the Battalion who we took orders from it just depended who was around at the time. I was my job to carry out the orders, not to second guess them.

Sometimes we had problems with prisoners being released that weren't suppose to be released. We would have to double check with MI to see if they still needed the prisoners that were scheduled for release.

The panel stopped, to discuss SSG [REDACTED] statements.

The panel reconvened.

Weapons were allowed in 1A and 1B, before the shooting incident we did weapons, but after the incident weapons were allowed. Also, after that we had a threat from the Iraqi corrections officers, who we received info that the ICO's were planning an attack on the prison involving guns and explosives.

Also access control was a problem in 1A and 1B, there wasn't a roster. We would ask for identification if we didn't recognize the person who was trying to enter, but most of the time they would be with MI.

We couldn't do anything we wanted to do the detainees, but there wasn't anything listed as far as limitations. We just used common sense.

I was never asked to do anything that would violate the Geneva Hague Conventions; I can't speak for my soldiers, but no of them never came to me about anything out of the way.

I think the incidents had to do with the individuals, sometime you have personnel that in the unit that have behavioral problems. There were no previous disciplinary incidents on the individuals who were involved, that I am aware of, I thought they were chosen because of their corrections officer experience.

I can't remember the Battalion Commander's name at this time.

I would like to reiterate on the support issue. Some officers from Battalion did support us. CPT Avery, and another CPT. They would listen to us, now that was good; I would talk to anyone who would listen. I just wanted to make sure that it was noted that some people did take some interest in the situation.

Finished with their discussion, the panel gave SSG [REDACTED] a list of items, to be addressed, and brought back on a Sworn Statement.