

On 10 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:

MG Antonio M. Taguba, [REDACTED] DCG-CFLCC, Interviewer
COL [REDACTED] Lackland AFB, TX, Member
CPT [REDACTED] CFLCC-SJA, Member
SFC [REDACTED] U.S. Army MP School, d, MO, Member
LTC [REDACTED] 744th Military Police Company, Respondent

The interview is summarized as follows:

My name is LTC [REDACTED]. My social security number is [REDACTED]. I am Battalion Commander of the 744th Military Police Battalion.

I have been the Battalion Commander of the 744th MP Battalion for a little over 3 years. We mobilized on 20 JAN 2003. We reported to the MOB station on 24 JAN 2003. Our MOB station was Fort Dix, New Jersey. We were at Fort Dix for 6 to 7 weeks. We conducted the regular training requirements mandated by FORSCOM. The MP's received training in handling detainees. The remainder of training was an MRE (mission readiness evaluation), which consisted of processing prisoners, setting up computers, accountability of prisoners, and proper handling of prisoners. Our unit has participated in previous exercises to gear us up for the mission here. We also received cultural awareness training at the MOB station.

There were no companies assigned to us upon our mobilization. We arrived here in theater on 21 MAR 03. About 7 to 10 days later we were assigned command and control over 320th MP Company upon their arrival. We were soon notified that we had Transshipment point mission up at Talil Air Base, Iraq. This mission was a non-doctrinal mission that we didn't have any training for. We were in Talil 2 to 3 weeks when we were assigned the 79th MP Company. I had 2 companies plus the HHC while we performed our mission at Talil.

The transient mission was a halfway point between Baghdad, Talil, and Bucca. When prisoners were captured in the Baghdad vicinity, the units would bring them in and we would process them, and then we would transport them down to Bucca. We had maybe 250 prisoners at one time.

We didn't perform any training in Kuwait in accordance to our mission. We were in Kuwait maybe 9 to 10 days before we moved forward, in Kuwait we were concerned about accountability of soldiers and equipment for the move forward.

Our peacetime trace is the 220th MP Brigade, when we arrived in country we were traced to the 800th MP Brigade. The commander was General Paul Hill. The 320th MP Company is a Army Reserve Unit from Florida, it's a combat support company. The 79th is also a combat support company. We realized that the companies were not trained for guard company mission, so we did a rotation so they could go out on escort missions and conduct external guard missions. As I recall the 320th MP company was the first to perform the external guard mission, and the 70th MP company performed the escort mission. Every three weeks they would rotate.

I never worked with General Hill or his staff before this mission. I had talked to him and his staff numerous times before we crossed the border. As the war progressed we could see a need for the Transition Point at Tallil. We basically operated a Field expedient detention facility.

We covered the Geneva Conventions with the soldiers several times. Our philosophy was that every guard has the right to defend themselves, but they do not have the right to abuse a prisoner physically and verbally and that has been stressed numerous times. There was a MI unit with us for sometime during the war. They were interrogating prisoners for intelligence value. They would come to the NCOIC of the facility and request a prisoner, and then the prisoner would be pulled out by a guard and escorted to a booth to be interrogated. There was nothing in writing; the vast majority of it was done verbally. The proximity of the MI people to the facility facilitated that method.

We were at the facility from April to November 2003. We processed close to 4000 prisoners through the facility. At the beginning of the war we transported the prisoners south to Camp Bucca. The 800th provided the bus and we provided the personnel. The prisoners were never shackled or restrained to the bus.

I never worked with Gen Karpinski before, the first time I met here was at the change of command. To my knowledge there was no change in policy after Gen Karpinski took command.

We accounted for the prisoners with capture tags. We created a database to account for the serial numbers off of the capture tags. To my knowledge Camp Bucca was in charge of the assigning the ISN numbers for the MDRS system. At our facility we accounted everyone with Excel spreadsheet. We had one escape while we were at the facility. We called the QRF and the canine team to conduct a search, but we didn't find him.

We transferred accountability of soldiers to Camp Bucca by making a spreadsheet of transferring detainees, putting them on bus, and moving them down to Camp Bucca. A physical headcount was done on the detainees when they entered and exited the buses. It

was a very simple, but effective method. We did accountability checks on the detainees at the facility at least twice a day if not more. The counts were verified by our database. There was not an SOP for us to distribute reports of the daily accountability checks to higher.

We closed the facility on 15 November 2003. We were reassigned to close the transfer point at Talil, and we did a relief in place with the 115th MP Battalion who was running Camp Cropper on BIAP. We had been to Camp Cropper several times before taking over because we made runs to the camp. At Camp Cropper we handle a number of high value detainees. My definition of a high value detainee is a former Baathist member or government official that someone else has characterized as a high value detainee. We have about a 101 high value detainees. We use the BAT system and the MDRS system at this facility, they were already in place upon our arrival.

Our task organization changed when we moved to BIAP. I lost the 320th MP Company they were tasked to 320th MP Battalion, I picked up the 186th MP Company and the 770th MP Company. I ended up with three companies at BIAP, the 79th MP Company stayed with me. The 770th is a guard company, and 186th and 79th are combat support companies.

We received information from the 115th MP Battalion prior to their departure. We also had a visit from ISG personnel and we in-turn went over to their headquarters to see how they ran things. We are not in the interrogation business, the ISG dictates who does the interrogation and when. We have never discussed with ISG on sleep deprivation, meal removal, or no other disciplinary actions. ISG handled all aspects of detainee interrogation. The ISG even complemented us on our supplement of hot rice and fruits along with their meals. We can make recommendations to ISG on unruly detainees, but ISG always handle discipline of detainees.

ISG also handles visitation. They control the visitation schedule, in my opinion it is a reward for providing intelligence information. There is only a select few who have the opportunity to participate. There are no family members who are allowed in the facility.

Aside from attending staff exercises and conferences at the 800th MP Brigade, we have no relations with the Brigade. The climate between the 800th MP Brigade and us was very good. Gen Karpinski visited us in Talil about 3 times, and she has been here at BIAP at least 3 times. The General was just performing the standard command presence visit to the installation.

The panel takes a break.

There had been no rumor of detainee abuse, except the incident in Camp Bucca with the four MPs that happened in May. There were notices passed down conduct would be upheld, standards would be checked on. There was e-mail traffic stating increasing of situational awareness, to review physical security barriers and procedures. I think there

was memorandums to that effect put out. The S-3 may have copies of those in their office.

I am familiar with AR 190-8. I am also familiar with FM 219-40. I believe my Battalion chain of command to be familiar with AR 190-8. My facility has the Geneva Conventions posted. I can't answer if the detainees understand the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. I feel that the members of the ISG understand the Geneva Conventions.

The ISG is made up of a mix of civilian and military. There is a military General over all of the civilians. Underneath the civilians there is an interrogations section. I would say they are familiar with the Geneva Conventions. Since we have taken over the HBD's, I can say that we haven't explained the provisions the detainees in the native language.

I was never informed by the Chain of Command about the Camp Bucca incident. I had heard about it through the press and the media. I never inquired about the incident through the Chain of Command. No of the units involved were traced to my Battalion. I had personnel that were asked to testify in the hearing, but none of the units were under my command and control. Some of the abused detainees came through the facility at Tahli.

We provided a daily sit-rep that was submitted to the 800th MP Brigade. There were conferences held at the Brigade, but because of the distance we did not attend. When we took over the mission we met with the ISG, then we went over to Camp Slayer to see how they run their operations.

My observation is that you have to build a facility then put the prisoners in, not have the prisoners in place and then try to build or expand on a facility. Communications are also a problem with the facilities, it think it contributed immensely to the problems any facility would. Putting combat support companies in a guard company role is also a substantial problem. Regardless of the training that the MP's my have had, you are never fully prepared for something like this. I think the mindset that most of us had is that we would be over here six or seven months than go home, but to have fought the war, performed missions successfully, and then being told oh by the way you are going to have to be here another six months is a lot for a soldier to take. Their families back home also had to suffer, which caused more stress on the individual soldier.

The Geneva Conventions are posted in the common areas, I doubt they are posted individually in each room.

The panel briefed LTC [REDACTED] and then dismissed him.