

On 15 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
COL [REDACTED] JTF-7, Member
LTC [REDACTED] 800th MP Battalion, Interviewer
CPT [REDACTED] 265th Engineer Group – SJA, Member
CPT [REDACTED], 800th MP Brigade, Respondent

The interview is summarized as follows:

My name is [REDACTED]. My social security number is [REDACTED]. I am a Captain. I am the Inspector General for the 800th MP Brigade.

I am the eyes and ears for the commander. I try to test the climate to see if everything is fine, if it is not I report any and all deficiencies. I provide assistance to all the down trace units for investigation and inquiries. My peacetime mission mirrors my wartime mission, since we are IR my mission goes into the scope of prisoners, to make sure their treatment and health and welfare is up to standard.

I don't recall the Geneva Conventions being posted in any of the compounds. When we relocated I know that we had some books containing detainees rights transcribed to Arabic so they could be sent to the different compounds.

I would say BG Karpinski and myself have a good working relationship. She listens to the advice that I provide her. We would have a staff meeting every night if I had issues I would address them to her afterwards. We tried to have a meeting once a week, it didn't always happen but when scheduled permitted we would meet.

I am co-located at Camp Victory with BG Karpinski. She didn't discuss her command philosophy with me. I spent a lot of my time on assistance cases. I was on the road a lot assisting the soldiers with their problems.

The soldiers never reported abuses to me. The command climate was ever changing, but I think it was healthy. Things were rough in the beginning as far as basic soldiers needs,

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but things gradually got better. It was my opinion that the detainees were being taken care of better than the soldiers. I would bring it up to the command and they were working on it, but things were just moving slow. I felt sort of helpless at times because I was doing all I could. Things really made a turn for the better when the DFAC was put together.

Around the August time frame, the major concern was when the soldiers would return home. I would brief BG Karpinski, but no one had an answer. When Donald Rumsfeld said units would only stay one year, that made a big change in the climate of the Brigade. Air conditioning, Ice, and water were also major issues in the command.

I can't tell you if the commander briefed the soldiers about their issues, because I was always out handling my mission, or something directed by the commander.

I wasn't able to determine the frequency of misconduct in the unit because at the time I was not aware of the disciplinary issues with the command. As the JAG and myself started to mesh together, I started to find out more. COL [REDACTED] was always truthful with me, but I perceived him as being arrogant. I know he didn't want to be bothered, but I stayed on top of him about information I needed.

I really didn't know much about LTC [REDACTED]. I knew he was a Battalion Commander. I had received a call from LTC [REDACTED] about looking at some counseling statements for 2 of his soldiers. I was pleasantly surprised to receive a call from him regarding his soldiers. LTC [REDACTED] never had spoken to me regarding the suspension of command that he had received.

From my observation the soldiers were always in uniform, and always used the general customs and courtesies.

Overall I think the 800th MP Brigade is a good unit. I think that some mistakes were made and some people lost their morale compass. I don't think there is anything that could have changed it. I think that the changes within the unit could have had something to do with it. For instance, LTC [REDACTED] was a nice guy, but he wasn't a fit for this type of job. I never expressed my opinion to the Battalion Commander. I thought that bringing in more help to LTC [REDACTED] would have helped tremendously. Still, my gut feeling tells me that he wasn't the man for the job.

I would rate LTC [REDACTED]'s command as a D or C. I would rate the 724th MP Battalion as a C. I try to stay away from rumors, but I have heard about sexual relations between the commander and subordinates. I would rate the 540th as a B. I would rate the 744th about a C to a B. I would rate the Headquarters as a B. I would rate the whole Brigade as a C. I feel that the unit needs help.

The books that were translated consisted of ICRC information from the SJA. COL [REDACTED] the CJTF-7 IG, requested the enough copies from me to distribute to the different compounds. The Geneva Convention was covered in these books.

The major issues that I hand dealt with spousal support, promotions, and pay. I did some due process reviews of UCMJ actions, and some harassment issues, but not sexual harassment. I did a lot of counseling and training that they had to let previous disciplinary issues with soldiers were things of the past and they had to let them go.

The Brigade Commander tasked me to do command climate-censing sessions for several MP Battalions and companies. I spoke to the staff and the company commander's and got a feel to see if there was anything wrong with the commands. No one came to me about the command; I had two people come with issues not pertaining to the censing session.

I would brief the General on what came out of the sessions, but there weren't any issues that I needed to bring to her level for assistance.

On the SGM [REDACTED] situation, an EO complaint had been sent up the chain. I informed the EO officer that I would speak to the parties involved. I spoke to both parties. I didn't receive much feedback from SGM [REDACTED]. I had let him no that when returned back to the rear that he would also have to talk to EO. The allegation was that the SGM inappropriately but his arm around a lower enlisted. A third party made the allegation. I briefed the General and told her what information was there. Their was an investigation initiated, and shortly after the SGM was relieved. I was told that there were also incidents back at Arifjan, with the SGM and the other party.

I heard that rumor about the 724th commander and one of her staff officers. I didn't find this out until way after BG Karpinski had took command. I am not sure if the incident had been investigated or not.

LTC [REDACTED] was suspended for about a week or so. LTC [REDACTED] and LTC [REDACTED] filled in while LTC [REDACTED] was suspended. MAJ [REDACTED] became the XO in November.

The command's responses to the allegations of misconduct towards detainees were taken very seriously. She would have the staff to come in to her office to explain exactly what happened. There were several meetings to review the ROE.

I am familiar with AR 190-8, not in detail, but I am familiar. BG Karpinski or BG Hill didn't task me to conduct spot checks on soldiers, or to see if the Geneva Convention was posted. I must admit that is partly my fault because that is one of my responsibilities that I did not take care of.

I just felt from LTC [REDACTED] demeanor that with some of the stronger personalities in the unit that it was a bad chemistry.

When I spoke to soldiers most of the did not have a problem with the chain command. I say for the most part the soldiers were trained to handle the missions. I didn't noticed

written special order at any of the guard post, I missed them because I wasn't looking for them.

I have very limited knowledge to the allegations of abuse at the BCCF.

I think that unlimited access at any given time to the facilities for the ICRC or any of the other non-governmental agencies would have helped a lot. There was a need for ongoing patrols, so there would be constant watch on everyone throughout the facility.

I know that early on there was a lot of pressure to get our facility up so that we could show the world how EPW's were suppose to be treated, as opposed to how our soldiers were being treated by the Iraqi's. During that whole process the ICRC was there showing us how everything was to be. We learned a lot from their presence. The problem of leadership hammering soldiers for incidents that had happened months ago has to stop in order for the units to run properly.

In the initial stages I wasn't aware of any detainee issues. I realized the issues were not with the detainees but with the soldiers.

I would rate discipline in the unit as a 3 with 5 being highest in the chart. We had a very large theater of operations where we had to transport detainees all over. I know of the all the successful trips that happened. I know of the living conditions in Camp Bucca. I would say the unit did a good job except for the allegations done by a few personnel.

I would rate mission readiness as a 4. We could not set up compounds until we crossed the burn, so we had to start behind the power curve. We also had numerous logistical challenges that made the mission very tough for us. All in all I think we did a good job with all the obstacles that we had to face.

The positive things that I saw was that the commander fully embraced the leave policy. One we passed the criteria everyone was afforded the opportunity to go wherever they wanted to go on R&R.

Ending on a note like this is truly embarrassing and really hurts the unit. The whole unit has to suffer for the actions of a few individuals

Finished with their discussion, the panel briefed CPT [REDACTED]. The panel then dismissed CPT [REDACTED]