

On 18 February 2004, a panel of officers, lead 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, **Interviewer**  
CPT [REDACTED], CFLCC - SJA, **Interviewer**  
SFC [REDACTED], U.S. Army MP School, **Interviewer**  
SGM [REDACTED], 320th MP Battalion, **Respondent**

The interview is summarized as follows:

I'm [REDACTED] Sergeant Major, 320th Military Police Battalion Operations Sergeant Major. My Social Security Number is [REDACTED]

CPT [REDACTED] then swears the Sergeant Major, and the interview continues.

I arrived to the 320th MP Battalion in June of '99, and I've been there ever since. I've been Operations Sergeant Major at several different units. I am an AGR soldier, so I've been transferred about. I never had any dealings with the 800th, before I got here. We deployed out of Fort Dix to Camp Arifjan Kuwait.

There, we had training in NBC defense posture. We had some training in platoon element type training. We had an event, the MRE. It was postponed, and then canceled at the last moment. We had a Post Mobilization Plan, but it pretty much went out the window. There was another training plan force fed to us, when we got there. Someone from the 77th RSC did the validation. We did not do much training on Combat Support Tasks. Basically, we trained on common tasks, and very limited I/R Battalion Tasks.

We arrived in Kuwait on 14 March, Sir. I went across the border on the 22nd of March with an ADVON from the 800th MP Brigade. We accompanied the MEF northward, to put up their first holding area. It was north of Talil, and Nasiriyah. They determined that it was too hot an area, so they brought us back down by Al Jazir. That was too hot, and they ended up telling us we had to take over the holding area the British were running at Umm Qasr, Camp Bucca.

ANNEX 80

Our training prior to going to Umm Qasr was very limited. We trained on NBC Defense Posture Methods. Everyone received the CFLCC Rules of Engagement. The Commander went through it line by line. Our Rules of Interaction is in our TAC SOP, and that was gone through with all of our people. It's a standard TAC SOP. We did update it for Iraq, prior to our leaving Fort Dix, and we had it republished at Fort Dix.

I would be surprised, if the 724th and 530th didn't have the same Rules of Engagement, because I remember the 800th going through it battalion by battalion, and I remember the changes. First it was the CFLCC Rules of Engagement, then the 800th's Rules of Engagement. Now, it's back to CFLCC Rules of Engagement.

The training was conducted at the platoon level, Sir. Our Platoon Sergeants did that. The Platoon Sergeants were pre-trained by MAJ [REDACTED] and myself. I don't recall if we had a sign-in roster, but we sat down with the entire platoon present, and because the platoons are so small, we knew if everybody was present.

We were briefed on the Geneva Convention, back at our home station, and we were briefed again on it at Fort Dix. I remember, prior to us going across, getting another brief on this. Treating all detainees with humanity and dignity is what the Geneva Convention boils down to, also safeguarding them, the 5 Ss, conducting operations in a humane manner, and giving them proper care, clothing, and food. I also recall that they have a right to Red Cross presence, and mail.

After the incidents of detainee maltreatment, we retrained everybody. We trained them by platoons, after we reorganized the platoons, because all of them came out of one platoon. We put senior NCOs in with the platoons, as well, to ensure there was always somebody there, during mission operations. At every shift change brief, at noon and midnight, I led the training. It was NCO driven. Running the compounds was NCO business. The Battalion Commander would have his own staff briefing, and give us the information he had to put out, and I would take that to the Shift Change Brief.

I've never received disciplinary action from BG Karpinski. She has approached me to tell me I was no longer the CSM, just the Operations Sergeant Major. I would like somebody to tell me why.

Who's in charge of training the 372nd? The Company Commander.

We don't have Guard Mount. We have Shift Change Briefs. Shift Change Briefs happened every 12 hours. You'd take all the information from that day to the brief, and you'd have the off coming shift, and the oncoming ones present. The senior NCO leadership would be present.

The Sergeant of the Guard was by company, so, in some cases, we'd have two companies with MPs present in one compound. So, you would really have two Sergeants of the Guard.

I was in the compound, at the time of the riot. The NCOIC of Compound 4, where it first started to swell up, called the TOC. MAJ [REDACTED] was in the TOC at the time. PFC [REDACTED] probably answered the radio. The information was logged, and given to the responsible person in the TOC, in that case MAJ [REDACTED] or probably the Battle Captain, probably [REDACTED], that day. He would have given it to MAJ [REDACTED] SSG [REDACTED] is one of our assistant Operations NCOs. He ran the afternoon shift. They called for the IRF to be on standby. Personnel from the 229th MP Company were manning the IRF. 1LT [REDACTED] was the Platoon Leader. The Platoon Sergeant probably was SFC [REDACTED]

Under the Rules Of Engagement for the Military Police, at the time, if any prisoner went through the wire, the exterior wire of the encampment, the prisoner would be told "Halt" three times, and if they did not halt, they would be shot.

The guard would have gone into his On Guard weapons stance, and they had shotguns with non-lethal ammunition at the time. SGT [REDACTED] was the first one to fire, that I recall with non-lethal ammunition. MAJ [REDACTED] would have given the order to progress. It's the S3's job to run the compound. LTC [REDACTED] responsible for the overall picture. The S3 owns the compounds. All the MPs work for the S3. They are in their direct chain in an I/R Battalion. The word came down from the TOC, and it kept progressing and elevating. It was to the point where it was literally a hail of rocks, and in order to protect MP's lives, the word came down from the TOC to fire lethal ammunition. There were a few shots of lethal ammunition fired, and indeed we shut everything down.

I don't know where the Battalion Commander was, at the time. I had moved from Compound 4 down to 1. I called the TOC, and said, "Get all available MPs down here." We need every available soldier down here." As they came filtering down, SSG [REDACTED] formed them into platoon-sized elements, and sent them to areas, where we needed support. I was keeping the runway open, so people could come through, against Compound 1, otherwise they would rock them so bad they couldn't get through.

The uniform, at that time, was the DCU, the flak vest, and the helmet. That's all that we had. We didn't have face shields. There were some shotguns, rifles, and pistols. Inside the wire, we take off our helmets and our flak vest, and go in with no weapon. We depend on the MPs in the towers for protection. We wear a soft cap, and an orange, PT-type vest. The Brigade Commander approved of that uniform. I've probably spent more time in those compounds than all the rest of the MPs put together. I didn't feel threatened. There's always a danger, but you have to depend on the MPs in the towers. I haven't checked all their marksmanship records, but they better be able to shoot from 50 yards away. They have standard ball, 5.56. The shotguns were on the ground, and they were used for roving. In the towers, they had M16s and 1 saw per compound. The rules were covered in every Shift Change Brief. In the tower, they would shoot, to protect life, whether it was another MP, or to protect an inmate's life. There are no warning shots. I'm sure. The Rules of Engagement are posted in the towers.

There are towers for the exterior wall. MI took those towers. Those guys were looking out, guarding as force protection. Inside, the towers looked in, guarding against anything that might happen with the prisoners. Those looking in are only MPs. We were taken out of the force protection role, and told to leave that alone. We had no more business with force protection.

We were told the MI Brigade was coming in to do C2, Base Ops, and we would handle all Military Police issues. That's what I heard several times from my Battalion Commander in meetings. It was my understanding that all detainee operations were still to be conducted by us, and there was no intermingling or association by the MI Brigade.

The hard site, Tier 1A and Tier 1B, was guarded by the 372nd MP Company, at the time. It would be hard to say how often I was there, but it was probably once a week. MI came to us, when they first came here, and said they wanted our MPs to do such things as Sleep Deprivation Program, and this type of thing. They wanted to have segregated units, and I said, "Stop right there. We don't have the capability to segregate... As far as doing things like Sleep Deprivation Programs, my MPs are not trained in that, and will not do that." The next thing that I knew, maybe two months later, I heard that our MPs were in fact doing things like escorting people with bags over their heads, doing the Sleep Deprivation Program. I went to the Battalion about it, and was told our Battalion XO said we had to do it. The Battalion Commander wasn't there at the time. I did go to MAJ [REDACTED] and he said, "This is just the way the program works." I don't know if there was anything in writing on it. Once the MI people took over, things just kind of developed along their line of thinking, especially in Camp Vigilant, and the hard site. The MI had control, including control of the guards.

I didn't raise the issue with SGM [REDACTED] I saw him out there only once. He was the Operations Sergeant Major. I didn't see him in his capacity as the acting Command Sergeant Major. CSM [REDACTED] came to see me maybe twice. I had interaction with CSM [REDACTED] only a couple of times. I saw him more often at Camp Bucca. I didn't try calling him. It would have been useless to talk to him. He had nothing to offer you. Guidance would come down from Brigade, but we got very little guidance in the NCO Channel from CSM [REDACTED]

I'm not sure who was in the TOC, during the riot. It could have been SFC [REDACTED] or SSG [REDACTED]. A report was provided to the 800th MP Brigade TOC in SIR format. I'm not sure if it was done telephonically. I would be surprised, if all of the reporting was through the 205th MI Brigade TOC.

I learned of the shooting, that happened that same evening, around midnight - 1 o'clock. I was up. I don't know if I was in the TOC. I'm everywhere. It depends on where the issues take me. It was common for me to be all over the place. I didn't have any junior NCOs to delegate those responsibilities to. It wasn't a matter of trust.

A Troop to Task was always being done. It was a living document. We had twelve different companies throughout the time we were there. We might lose a company that

had eighty-eight men, and get one that was sixty-six. So, we were constantly dealing with Troops to Task issues.

HHC is all LSA activities. Detention Operations belonged to S2. HHC personnel are the medics, the motor pool people, and the cooks. Five different dog handlers came in, two Army ones, and three Navy ones. There was an initial discussion over who owned them, because the 205th MI said, "We requested three. Those are the three that we got, the Navy ones." The Battalion said, "We requested them all, so we get them all." Finally, it was decided that all the dog handlers would work for the S3, exclusively.

They are supposed to do a walk through the compounds, for demonstration persons. They were supposed to be on call in 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day. They were supposed to walk through as a patrol measure. They were supposed to use to quell down riots or fights in the compound. They were good for searching tents for knives or those types of items. They also accompanied the IRF in crowd control. I don't remember when the SOP was written. We do have an SOP. I helped MAJ [REDACTED] write SOPs. I referenced FM 19-40, 3-19-1, all of our higher operations manuals. We had one, I don't recall the number, on military working dogs. Military dogs were new to us.

I don't know if the dogs were used for interrogation purposes. Three of them are certified bomb-sniffing dogs. Two are narcotics dogs. We used them all for patrol, but we tried to utilize the bomb dogs out at the ECP for the searches, there. I don't think the advisement of the dog handlers was taken all that much, when they wrote the SOPs. I was present on one occasion, when CPT [REDACTED] and an Army dog handler got into a discussion about their proper roles and utilization. There were disagreements about that. I don't recall the names of the dog handlers. I know SGT [REDACTED] and there's a Specialist, but I don't remember his name. I did hear that a dog bit somebody. I was at Victory, when that happened.

There was somewhat of a conflict between the NCOIC for the Army dogs and the NCOIC for the Navy dogs. There were disagreements on how the dogs should be utilized. The NCOIC from the Navy was cooperative, and SGT [REDACTED] was much less cooperative. I did not know SGT [REDACTED] was a suspect in detainee abuses.

MG Taguba hands SGM [REDACTED] a document listing the Interrogation Rules of Engagement, and directs SGM [REDACTED] attention to the list of items in the right hand column. SGM [REDACTED] responds:

I've never seen this, Sir. These are not the functions of the MPs, Sir. I wouldn't know how to go about doing that, and I'm a Senior MP. I'm certain my junior MPs wouldn't. We're not trained for that, Sir.

AR 190-8 covers the proper treatment of detainees. Extracts from the Geneva Convention were posted. It was ripped down. We ended up giving the books themselves to the Compound Reps, so they would have a copy. A Compound Representative is a prisoner appointed Mayors. All but one or two could speak English, and they had

assistants who could. They had compound speakers, English speakers that would assist the Representatives with the language between the Compound Commanders and the prisoners. It would have made sense to post it in a language they would understand. It probably wasn't posted out of frustration, because everything was torn down.

We did give the book to the Compound Reps, we met with the Compound Reps several times a week, and talked about all the issues that were in there. We went through them in the books. They had meetings with their tent representatives. Each tent had a representative. They went through that with them. So, everybody was made aware of it. All the prisoners and detainees are aware of all their rights. We've been through it with the guards.

Sir, they didn't break those rules, and treat prisoners inhumanely because of lack of knowledge. They did that out of their own choosing. It was their individual choice. They did have proper training and leadership.

We had an After Action Review for the riot. Some basic changes were put into place. Such as, keeping vehicles out of the runway, and putting them on one end. We would keep four vehicles on the other end, in case we lost the compound and had to evacuate. Another part of it was only the TOC could authorize non-lethal. There was a plan that was put on paper. It was briefed down to the lowest Private in the Battalion. They all had to sign. Then, we had train up scenarios on that. I'm not aware if this was shared with the MI community.

I was made aware of the incidents of detainee abuse that resulted in the apprehension of some of the soldiers from the 372nd MP Company on, I think, Friday the 17th of January. MAJ [REDACTED] advised me that I would no longer be operating as the Ops Sergeant Major on Sunday evening, the 18th of January. He just said that this was direct from the 800th Brigade, and to bring enough clothes for a week, and show up there. No one has told me why I was suspended. I've had discussions with my Battalion Commander about things that led up to the incident.

I constantly interact with the NCOs from my Battalion. I don't know about SSG [REDACTED] background. I interacted with SSG [REDACTED] a little bit. SFC [REDACTED] was the Platoon Sergeant, there. I've had interactions with [REDACTED] I think he's a team leader. I didn't interact with CPL [REDACTED] other than to give the greeting of the day, "How are you doing?" this kind of thing. I know SGT [REDACTED] was the one that was shot, but I don't really know him. I read the SIR on it. I know that the individual had a weapon and shot him. Luckily, he was wearing his vest. He returned fire with non-lethal.

The command climate wavered between good and bad. It never really got to bad, but it was never a really good command climate either. Our NCOs rallied around each other, and supported the rest of the soldiers in the Battalion on this thing. We're not going to let one black mark take us down. You've done a good job. You've worked and soldiered hard. Now, we're going to continue on and drive on. LTC [REDACTED] wanted the

soldiers to know he was proud of them, and he wanted them to be proud of what they accomplished.

LTC [REDACTED] is very quiet. Sometimes, he would lay back too much. I went to MAJ [REDACTED] for guidance on a regular basis. At times, he would say I run this Battalion. He had the LTC's ear. He definitely could get the LTC's support on whatever was his issue at the time.

The LTC had been pulled down to 800th Brigade. He suspended or relieved, I don't know which, for a period of two weeks. He came back. LTC [REDACTED] was in there, at the time. CSM came at that time for a two-month period.

Sir, I've never seen a Brigade operate like that in my life. It wasn't cohesive. It just seemed like a conglomeration of people doing what they wanted to do. It didn't seem like everyone in the traces were pulling the same way.

Sir, we should definitely increase training, increase awareness, increase supervision on soldiers. Impart to the soldiers that they are responsible too, from Private on up. I think that's the answer more than over-supervising. That's just saying we don't trust you. Building a trusting relationship amongst the soldiers, and teamwork that's what it's going to take. I think the trust kind of split, when we had the first incident at Bucca, Sir. I don't know if the trust came back in all those areas. In some platoons it did. In some platoons it didn't.

Well, I think the leadership needs to answer for why it occurred, and how it could be prevented, and how to ensure it wouldn't happen again. I also think individual soldiers should answer for their own activities.

I've only heard pieces of all that happened, there. I don't know if I ever will hear what transpired. I think some soldiers were pulled out that did some very hard work, there. They were loyal to this Battalion and worked extremely hard. I've preached dignity and humane treatment to all of my soldiers, since day one. I read General [REDACTED] documents, addressing respect and dignity, in treating Iraqi citizens and detainees, to my soldiers during Shift Change Briefs.

The interview complete, MG Taguba reminds SGM [REDACTED] to not discuss or reveal the contents of the interview, and he is released subject to recall.