

On 11 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 Gharib 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] MP, CFLCC – PMO, Interviewer
LTC [REDACTED] A, CFLCC – SJA, Interviewer
LTC [REDACTED], 705th MP Battalion, Interviewer
MAI [REDACTED] NAS Signal and Canine Unit, U.S. Navy,
Interviewee
SSG [REDACTED] Jr., [REDACTED] 27D30, CFLCC – SJA, Recorder

The interview is summarized as follows:

My name is MAI [REDACTED] I am in the U.S. Navy. My social security number is [REDACTED]. I am assigned to the NAS Signal and Canine Unit. I can be addressed as Petty Officer or MAI.

I received a verbal order from my Chief back at NAS signal saying that there was a mission coming up at that I may receive it. Time passed and I was told that I would be the one to take the mission here. I am a dog handler. I came here with two other individuals from the same region, but different basis. We arrived here on 18 November 2003. We were given no specific instructions before our arrival here. We reported to the 320th TOC when we arrived, prior to coming to the prison we met with MAJ [REDACTED] and he told us he was the POC.

As far as I knew we were to support the prison with canine support. I had never worked in a prison environment before. We did a one-day training period on scout and search for escape prisoners back at my unit. No one wanted to claim us when we arrived here so the 229th Military Police Company picked us up. It was just us navy dog handlers that got picked up by the 229th MP CO, the army dog handlers arrived a day or two later. We had a total of five dogs here. There were three navy dogs and two army dogs.

We usually worked with the Internal Reactionary Force (IRF). We would go out with the IRF when they received a call from the 320th TOC. I believe CPT Jones to be the commander of the 299th MP Company. We never received any orientation on what was

expected out of our canine unit, we just used common sense. I am the NCOIC for the navy dog handlers, and SSG Cordona is the NCOIC for the army dog handlers.

We usually stayed in close contact with CPT [REDACTED] and MAJ [REDACTED]. Upon arrival we began working with the IRF on a daily basis, then about a week later we took over the Entry Control Point East (ECP) for vehicle searches as well as working with the earth. I went over a work schedule with CPT [REDACTED] regarding a rotation for covering the ECP and the IRF. We had one dog at the ECP, and the other two on standby with the IRF.

We never received any instruction on the use of force in the compound. We raised question on what we could and could not do in this environment, but we never received a straight answers. I briefed my team to use common sense, and use your escalation of use of force as the situation dictates. Based on the escalation of use of force, a dog cannot be employed on a prisoner if that prisoner is not posing a threat.

I have a Belgium Melon. He is a control explosive dog. My dog had never been in a prison environment. The dogs didn't have to be retrained we used the same commands

On the night of 24 NOV 03 we were with the IRF when we received a call to search the hard site for explosives. We had heard also that a prisoner had someone had been shot. All 5 dogs were there that night. The army dogs were for security while our dogs searched for explosives. We went to specific Tier, I couldn't tell you the name, but I could show you if I were in the facility. We searched the cells for explosives, none of the dogs responded. We were preparing to leave when we were told we needed to search another cell. I decided to conduct the search. I reentered the Tier and saw two individuals who were dressed in green BDUs. They instructed me to search the cell and as I approached the cell I heard a lot of shouting and screaming. I looked around and noticed that there was no one else up there; that no other cells were occupied.

I peaked my head in the cell and noticed four individuals, three males and one female. One male was in the corner, two males were crouching, and the female was next to the rack. I was having a hard time controlling my dog because of the noise, and the actions that were happening. I finally got my dog under control when one of the MI guys told one of the detainees, "If you don't tell me what I want to know I'm gonna get this dog on you", or words to that effect. I realized that it wasn't a search and they actually wanted my services for interrogation. I exited the cell, but my dog would break the plan of the cell. The two individuals and the female, which I know now to be an interpreter, reentered the cell and went back in a started yelling and screaming at this guy again.

With all the yelling and screaming going on my dog breaks my control and charges the cell. The cell was very dark; the only illumination was a pin light. I see the female wincing, and I notice my dog on her arm. I immediately call my dog off of her, and my dog comes back to the heel. I ask the female to come out so I can check her. She comes out of the cell and I constantly ask her, "Are you alright, did he bite you??" She says she is ok and that she wasn't bit. I looked at her arm no bite mark, no blood, and her DCU uniform wasn't torn. I once again ask her if she is ok, and does she need medical

attention. At that point I see SGT [REDACTED], and I ask what's going on, and he responded by saying he didn't know. Once I realized what was going on I left, I didn't want any part of what was going on. As I was leaving, SGT [REDACTED] followed and then I heard someone say, "where's the dog, where's the dog?"

No names were said but I know one of the individuals was about 6'4", short black hair, slender build, brown eyes, wearing civilian clothes. The interpreter was about 5'7", medium black hair, and I believe she wore glasses. I couldn't tell you what the other two looked like.

When I arrived at the cell I let the personnel know I was there for the search. I never had a discussion with the MI about my dog being used in interrogation. It was a male's voice asking where the dog was. The other navy handler's were called and they actually refused the call because of my incident. They were called once more and then again they refused.

When a search is conducted the detainee should be removed, leave everything in the same condition, give the command for the dog to search the room, let the dog search the room, and then exit the room. On 24 NOV 2003 we were called to the compound to conduct the explosive search. I have never been called to Camp Ganci or Camp Vigilance without the IRF. We keep paperwork on the dogs; the form is a 5585/3-detection/utilization form. We turn in a copy each month. I don't have a record for the incident on 24 NOV 2003, because we only keep track of active searches.

We were never instructed on the Geneva Hague Convention, I just try to treat people with respect. There has been occasions where we have let the IRF commander, 1LT [REDACTED] know we have refused to go to the compound. We were never told not to comply with MI and MP's when they request us to assist them. We never received any guidance on what was authorized and not authorized. The interrogators never approached us individually about us assisting them at the compound. I don't know if the Army dog handlers were ever approached.

SSG [REDACTED] set up a wall between the Army dog handlers and us. SSG [REDACTED] stated that the Navy was basically dipping into his Kool-Aid. I sit down with SSG [REDACTED] to try to work as one team, but SSG [REDACTED] didn't want to work as a team. We work for the IRF commander, and the Army dogs work for the compound.

I have heard rumors that there are videotapes and pictures of detainee abuse, and I heard there was a videotape of a rape. We have a SOP that was written up by CPT [REDACTED] and containing input and guidance from myself. The SOP basically states that the navy handlers are not to be used for anything except for what we were trained for.

SSG [REDACTED] and myself shared lessons learned. If anything came up on a professional level we would share it with each other. I honestly believe that dogs are under utilized here; I don't think there is a need for dogs here other than the ECP and for any escape attempts.

We once went out with the 82nd on a mission outside of the compound. We provided security for their team, and also searched fields for weapon caches. I recommended that there be only one canine unit team assigned to this compound.

The SOP that CPT [REDACTED] and myself worked on was finished in December. I know CPT [REDACTED] tried making the Army Handlers follow the SOP and I personally gave SSG [REDACTED] two copies of the SOP, but like I said before SSG [REDACTED] didn't want to be part of a team.

I received my dog handling training at the 341st Training Squadron, Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, TX. My next assignment was with Southwest Regional Canine Unit, San Diego, CA.

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

The panel reconvened.

There were two male personnel dressed in civilian cloths inside the cell that I assumed to be MI. There were two personnel dressed in BDU's were outside across from the cell.

The Tier had lights on but the cell was dark.

That was my first time in the hard site.

I was outside the hard site when I received the call about a dog being needed. I assumed when the call was placed for a dog, that I was needed to conduct a search. I realized once the interrogator threatened the detainee with the dog, that it was not for a search.

When my dog lunged, I came forward about three or four seconds and regained control of my dog and pulled him back. My dog's leash is about six foot; it did not extend all the way. They started back yelling and screaming and that is when I lost control of my dog again. My leash extended almost all of the six feet. I couldn't tell the detainees reaction because it was so dark, at that time I was trying to regain control of my dog.

We would train with the IRF from time-to-time. We would rehearse in an open area near the compound. When we got called out for a search, the compound supervisor would let us know it was clear to enter. Next the IRF takes a line formation in front of the "pen". Once the line is set we take someone from the IRF and we start to search the tents, as they hold the line. Once we done searching the tents we position ourselves behind the line. When we search the cells, it's just the dog handler and the dog.

5585.2 B is the Navy military working dog manual. I haven't seen or reviewed any Army Manuals regarding military dogs.

Finished with their discussion, the panel briefed MA1 [REDACTED] and then they dismissed him.