

On 14 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] 5, DCG-CFLCC, **Interviewer**

[REDACTED] JA, CFLCC – SJA, **Interviewer**

[REDACTED] 705th MP Battalion, **Interviewer**

[REDACTED] 800th MP Brigade, **Interviewee**

[REDACTED] **Recorder**

The interview is summarized as follows:

My name is [REDACTED], Armor, [REDACTED] 2. Current assignment is S-2 of the 800th MP Brigade, my former assignment I was the XO of the 320th MP Battalion at Abu Ghraib.

I have been associated with the 800th MP Brigade since January 1995. I served on the Brigade staff until 1996 or 1997 and then I formed the 455th Brigade Liaison Detachment, co-located with the unit, but a separate UIC with a different function under the Brigade. Subsequent to that I was the XO for the 306th MP Battalion. I physically reported to the Brigade headquarters on 24 December 2002 that I was now the Brigade S-2 and on the 27th of December, they told me I was taking the Early Entry Module.

I brought the Early Entry Module into theater upon deployment. I reported with the rest of the Early Entry Module to Uniondale, New York, our home station on 2 January and on 4 January we reported to Fort Dix, NJ, the mob site. I arrived 26 January with the cargo pallet and the other ten members of the Early Entry Module arrived the afternoon of the 27th of January. The headquarters stayed at Fort Dix until I was deployed for about three weeks.

I was the OIC of the Early Entry Module and in discussions with the force trainers at Fort Dix, we tried to come up with what would be a valid ARTEP mission evaluation without imposing undue constraints. We were not configured to be a brigade headquarters or liaison detachment. There was no ARTEP for Early Entry Module, it was a force package of 11 officers and NCOs and office equipment to arrive and setup the

headquarters. The closest mission analogy would be preparing a skeleton headquarters for forward movement.

We designed this from commander's guidance since I joined the Brigade in 1995. It is not a part of our METL. All the Mission Essential Tasks of an IR Brigade Headquarters, the functioning of the Early Entry Module doesn't raise itself to a high mission essential level. I really have no inclination of the METL. I would assume that one of those tasks would be command and control and a subtask would be the formation and employment of the Early Entry Module (EEM).

General Hill had preceded the Brigade Headquarters, as was the deputy and the executive officer and one of the S-3 planners. The OIC for the main body of the headquarters that mobilized through Fort Dix was [REDACTED]

I had no knowledge of the types of tasks they were to train on at Fort Dix as they were in a separate set of barracks. [REDACTED] were in the next detachment coming right behind us, so we brought them with us before the main body. After validation, we spent time with the 724th MP Battalion, which was the lead battalion coming in.

Our trainer for the validation was a training NCO from Fort Dix Readiness Group. SFC (female) can't remember her last name. She was a very capable NCO and an MP. The majority of training she had done in the past was for combat support MP battalion missions. She had also worked with guard companies and evaluated them before and she had worked with MP companies that were peacetime downtrace to my former combat support MP battalion. I don't remember the specifics of the training, but I remember sitting down with her early in the process when we were developing the schedule. We stacked the mandatory Fort Dix requirements of range firing, CIF issue, things like that towards the front and then we had scheduled Officer Professional Developments because the staff that had been coupled together for the EEM were a lot of filler people that hadn't operated at the MP IR Brigade level before. I conducted OPD's, terrain orientation overview of the theater, Geneva Convention requirements, dealing with the International Community Red Cross and Red Crescent, FM 190-8. We covered a range of topics because we didn't have specific training plans for the quartermaster people and the brigade S-4 shop or the S-3 shop. The NDRS officer, [REDACTED] with 367th MP Group was very fluent with the NDRS system. She gave background classes in the PWIS, NDRS training system.

Everybody knew that we were here to do the EPW mission. In that context, training was provided relative to all those things for sure in my detachment. The main body, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as probably giving almost identical classes.

We had to design something for our module that I thought would coincide with training certification for which there is not doctrine associated with. We arrived at that by going through the available MTPs for the IR battalions and the brigade. Eliminated the tasks that would require the full involvement of a brigade headquarters. Scaled down the

remaining tasks suited to an 11-man task force to set up a headquarters via a JUMPTOC operation, planting the flag in Kuwait and focused on those tasks.

General Hill went on before all of us and arrived in country first. He validated through Bragg. It would have been ideal to train collectively on collective tasks rather than individual tasks, had we been able to execute it. The method in which we were brought in was driven by the TPFD. The TPFD has a 12-man ADVON. We were broken up into individual UICs and parceled us out into the flow when we should have gone together.

Main body arrived in country second week of February. The brigade in essence arrived at Arifjan. Based on guidance from PMO and C-2 we were told to anticipate somewhere in excess of 80,000 Enemy Prisoners of War. Enemy Prisoners of War was going to be our mission. There was no mention of refugees, internees, displaced civilians or any of the other Geneva classes. It was purely to be an EPW mission. We were told that contrary to doctrine, contrary to everything we had ever trained for as a brigade or exercised in any of our simulation exercises, we could not immediately start work building camps because they could not be on Saudi soil, out of scud distance where they should be. They couldn't be on Kuwaiti soil out of long gun artillery distance, which at a minimum they should have been. Instead, they had to be on Iraqi soil and since we didn't own an inch of Iraqi soil, we would have to wait until ground had been seized and then start building. From numerous iterations of exercises on how to get these things built, we knew it would cost somewhere around \$14 million and would require about 600 CONEXs worth of supplies for the first four thousand man camp. As we had told 377th TSC over the past five years we've been working for them, this is a big monster and it sucks down logistics. It is designed to be in a secure theater rear with an ASG pushing supplies to it. Once you break that paradigm, you have to be prepared to support it. They said, "Okay, we got it."

So we initiated our planning for a location called Bucca. It was supposed to be on the main highway between Zubayr and Talil about halfway across a set of revetments that the Marine Expeditionary Force intended for their core holding area and not too far distant from where V Corps had their initial plan for their core holding area. Since a lot of the doctrine for backhaul of EPWs relied on light and medium truck companies because of the responsibility to evacuate EPWs is incumbent upon the capturing unit until they get them back to the core rear area and then the core should coordinate with theater for theater trans assets to haul them back and a lot of those trucking assets had gone over to the PLS system. So we knew that backhaul was going to be a huge problem. Rather than go just 2 inches across the Iraqi border, we decided it would be more prudent to tuck the initial camp location up as close to the core holding areas as possible in order to minimize the transport. We picked a spot across from where the Marines were going to be establishing their core holding area. The Marines and V Corps in the OPPLAN and also in the exercise that was conducted mid-February, late-February. They had specific instructions that they were to be prepared to build their core holding area to a capacity of 4,000 EPWs and be prepared to hold them for up to 30 days. That amount of time and that amount of stand-off would give us, if properly supported, the opportunity to haul \$14 million worth of plywood and piping into Iraq and on Iraqi soil build the camp properly.

Long and short of it was, the Marines built theirs and never used it, the British had roughly 80 percent of the EPW in hand and the smartest solution because the original planned location was untenable because the fighting was still going around Nasariya and then north over towards Kerna and long gun artillery was still in range of the proposed location. We put it down in the vicinity of Camp Freddy which we had helped the British in their recon of where they were going to put their divisional collection point and we elected to displace what had been intended for Bucca to go over there. We built Camp Bucca there.

There were two battalions at Bucca initially, the 320th was sent in to initiate taking over what was then called Camp Freddy which was the British collection point; and the 724th which was the lead battalion into theater was sent there to build the new camp. It probably could have used a Combat Support Battalion and maybe an additional two guard companies or combat support companies. All of our prior training was directed towards building it to the rear of the core rear boundary in a secure theater rear. We were bleeding off MP IR battalion strength and MP guard company strength to do the force protection mission at Camp Bucca because the Umm Qasr to Zubayr and Umm Qasr up to Basra area was still not completely secure, they were receiving regular RPG attacks. By definition then, your prisoners are not out of harms way.

Around mid-November I took over as the XO of the 320th MP Battalion at Abu Ghraib. This was a temporary assignment until I redeployed. They had been without an XO since June 2003. This was an extraordinary means taken by General Karpinski because the bulk of S-2 work happened during the ground fighting phase. I then became the liaison to CPA prisons department in June, after she assumed command. After they started hiring more civilians for the CPA prisons department she moved me into the XO position.

The guidance I was giving in assuming that role was not specific, it was more along the lines of see what you can do out there to ensure that everything is done properly. She knew full well that I had been an XO for almost four years in my prior battalion. So, out of all the staff officers, I had more XO experience than any of them.

[REDACTED] was the battalion commander at the time. He gave me guidance about what I expected, of what a full strength IR battalion generally focuses on is the non-compound operations. The processing line, the logistics, the maintenance of the vehicles, things that rarely get addressed at the MP company level because the companies usually don't have XOs. You may or may not have an escort guard company. They are accustomed to doing their own IR battalion HHC, guard company one, guard company two. At the time, they had four companies, none were actual guard companies, but combat support companies who had been reflagged at mob site as guard companies. So, I was focusing on company work, the logistics, and the enablers to let the compound operations function more smoothly.

We also had significant dealings with the 205th MI Brigade. They were the “other” people on post and at that point they made up roughly 45% of the population at Abu Ghraib.

The 205th's principle requirement was as a Forward Operating Base and all units in that FOB were TACON'd to them, pursuant to FRAGO 1106. When I got there, everyone still looked to the 320th MP Battalion as the “base owner” and the base mayor. And if anything went wrong on “the base” they came to the MP battalion to get it fixed. This FRAGO came out about a week after I arrived, on 19 November.

It was clearly understood by the battalion what TACON'd meant. I asked the 205th if they were ever going to give specific instructions about what being TACON'd to them meant. The original JTF-7 FRAGO was fairly straightforward. They brought in the 165th MI Battalion and increase the headcount in. They also brought a LRS Company with them to increase the headcount again. But they never published a FRAGO detailing what each battalion's role was. I asked about a FRAGO and they said they weren't going to publish one. This was between battalion commander and battalion commander.

The working dogs didn't get there until after I arrived. They were being used at the Entry Control Point. We had two Army teams and three Navy teams. They were being used in a straightforward, doctrinal, military working dog for Entry Control Point stuff, around the fringes of crowd control, but more as a deterrent when we were doing shakedowns in the compounds, tent searches. I'm not aware of them being used inside the hard site. Hard site security internee, pod 1A and 1B was used for criminal segregation of females and juveniles and I think a couple of TB cases.

We never permitted guards to wear their weapons inside the compounds. I remember that around 17 November, very near the end of Ramadan, we had a riot in the compounds and it involved a lot of rock throwing and in re-establishing control of the compounds, we had blown through all non-lethal projectiles at hand and we went with lethal ammunition and we had four detainees killed and two more later died of wounds even after MEDIVAC. That night we had the incident over in pod 1A where a detainee had gotten his hands on a pistol and I think two bayonets that had been smuggled to him by an Iraqi Corrections Officer and he fired at our MP search team that was going through the cells to find the weapon. The soldier had his ballistic armor on and returned fire with non-lethal first and then went with lethal fire, but aimed at the detainee's legs and that's what stopped the engagement. The very next day we received a change in uniform posture from the 800th that said that anytime you are in a position where you are dealing with detainees directly, your uniform is Kevlar and ballistic armor. Prior to that the requirement was soft cap and out garment because body armor was too easily snagged and you are dragged to the ground and beaten senseless or you get a shank in your throat.

I was not aware that on the 24th of November the working dogs were being used in the hard site for other than searches. I was not aware of two military dogs being used to attack a prisoner.

I know that escapes had happened prior to my arrival. I think they were from the Ganci compounds. We had around 34,000 people and only 34 escapes. Part of the brigade objective is to prevent escapes. When Camp Freddy was being run by the British, they were losing up to 100 people a night. There was one escape after I got there who was an Iraqi Correction Officer who had a relative who signed him out and helped him escape.

I grew to know [REDACTED] fairly well while I was his executive officer until his release.

The climate within the battalion following the MSG Girman incident was good within the 320th HHC. Some of the newer companies that had not been working with the 320th in the past, it was a developing situation with young leaders in a combat zone stepping up to command in situations that were not what their companies had always been their bread and butter. The 372nd came in to replace the 72nd. To my knowledge the 372nd had never worked with the 320th before whether in peacetime or in this deployment. The 320th was strung kind of thin, so it was a challenging mission for them. The IR mission at Abu Ghraib was strikingly similar to the IR mission at Camp Bucca with the exception that as poorly supported as the building of Camp Bucca was; the building out at Abu was under even worse conditions. Bucca wasn't built on a landfill and there was some separation between the compounds.

Before I arrived, and what I heard was [REDACTED] was sent to Arifjan for a "time out" and they sent [REDACTED] out there. [REDACTED] was also a Battalion Commander for the 115th. I didn't think it was odd to assign [REDACTED] in this position temporarily. The HVD operation is pretty low scale, there are only about 100 people and very little involved to run. Abu has about eight times the population of Guantanamo and they're doing it with roughly a third to half the MPs. It seemed odd because I'm the senior Major in the brigade, but I think it was a good choice.

I also know that [REDACTED] had some emergency leave and I think he had some R&R leave early in the summer. Then in the December timeframe when I was going on R&R leave, he had an emergency leave that lasted about 8-10 days.

What I got from CID was that the incidents of indecent acts at Tier 1A it has been reported to them a few hours prior to them coming to tell me. I don't remember the date, but I was still the XO. I had not prior knowledge. They showed me the CID reports and they showed me the CD that had been turned in to them. It showed pictures of detainees in degrading positions and being abused and photographed. It showed two females clothed and seated on a bunk and in one of the photos it was of one of the females exposing her breasts. It was an Iraqi prisoner that I had recognized from one of the pods. Having a female criminal was an out of the ordinary circumstance. The only criminals that were to be brought to Abu Ghraib by the Iraqi police were male convicts or male pre-trial detainees. They would bring us females and juveniles all the time and they'd be gone before we could ask why they left them. We put them in isolation in IB to keep them segregated from the male population and 1A had the security internees in isolation because they were being interrogated and IB was being used for criminal isolation.

I was never involved in the development of the detention Rules of Engagement. We were on the fourth or fifth version of the Rules of Engagement. It would be developed between the brigade SJA and the brigade S-3 and the brigade staff. When they had it down to final draft form, they would SIPR it to the battalions. We would give recommendations or ask for clarification and they would say okay and when it was ready, they would send it electronically and the battalions would print up copies and give it out at the shift change briefings and cover it at the next staff update and force protection briefing. Then make up flyers and get them out to each of the companies. There were copies posted in the guard towers.

Guard mounts were conducted. It was done decentralized. Over time, some of them may have gotten out of the routine of doing formal guard mounts. I would think a more experienced unit could rely on their senior NCOs to change out the guard posts.

I knew the daytime NCO in Tier 1A and 1B, [REDACTED]. I had met all of the guards, but I couldn't remember their names.

I didn't know [REDACTED] in-depth; mostly through official interactions with him as a company commander. He impressed me as a real sharp company commander, he was well seasoned and rational. He was a strong leader and trained a very effective company operations section. I've always felt the MP company should have an XO.

Two weeks prior to FRAGO 1106, 320th MP Battalion asked the 205th MI if somewhere in the MI pool of soliders they could cough up four people to man one tower. The response was no their soldiers were doing a more important mission. Within 48 hours of that FRAGO coming out, there was an MI battalion and a LRS company on site.

I think the battalion commander had a good relationship with all the company commanders. The Command Sergeant Major, [REDACTED] had not yet arrived in theater. He showed up in December. The acting CSM, [REDACTED] on loan from the 530th whom I knew from Uniondale. He was establishing a good climate until they pulled him out. The operations sergeant major was working well with all of the first sergeants and company operations NCOs as was [REDACTED] the compound NCOIC. [REDACTED] facilitated the company commanders and company leadership interacting with the battalion staff and working to accomplish the IR mission.

The battalion was overwhelmed for the mission they were handed. They were not configured to run a 4K IR facility here, a 600 man IR facility over there, and a prison over here that could potentially hold 2000 people and then the 4000 compound you put 5600 people in. This is a 2 IR battalion mission.

Every moment of every day we requested assistance and got nothing. We were supposed to do it with our own organic assets. The brigade received that response. There was a concerted effort RFF process. The majority of their discussion was that they could handle the original mission. The mission creep is what is killing us. Abu Ghraib was

supposed to be a hard site, incarceration, post-trial criminals, that's the mission that the 320th was given. They built prior to all of the hard site being renovated, a small tent facility that could hold 600 criminals. When it became complete it became a security internee mission and immediately you had segregation issues. Then MI moved in, took over 50 percent of the facility and made it the premier interrogation place.

I put a stop to the MPs escorting the detainees to be interrogated because of an incident related to me only two weeks after I arrived was that one of the male detainees was being interrogated naked and then my MPs had to escort him back to his cell in 45 degree temps with nothing but a bag over his head, and one of the MPs was a female. So I forbade them beginning that day, to escort the detainees to interrogation. I discussed it with the battalion commander and I gave the instruction to the company commander and the company operations NCO. He spoke to [REDACTED] the JIDIC OIC, within 24-48 hours. I made it very clear to him that we would help the MI folks if they needed help brushing up on their "how to handle a prisoner" skills, but would no longer escort them to interrogations.

[The session recessed at 1608 hours, 14 February 2004.]

[The session resumed at 1623 hours, 14 February 2004.]

I have never been able to secure a copy of the Detention Rules of Engagement.

[MG Taguba shows [REDACTED] the Detention Rules of Engagement.]

I have seen something like this posted in the JIDIC cell at Abu. I wasn't aware that this was the final copy. I had asked [REDACTED] for a block of training on these procedures for the guards. Nothing like this has ever come near any of our cells that says that there are written instructions about a specific detainee signed by General Sanchez, or anybody else. Although I had asked for it. The interrogators may tell them verbally some instructions, but it wasn't put into writing. The request I made to [REDACTED] was discussed by LTC [REDACTED] and I'm fairly confident he had the discussion with General Karpinski. When I was the acting commander, I asked [REDACTED] for two things. One, a training block on what are acceptable things in the MI world; and two, something in writing for requirements on each detainee.

I barely knew [REDACTED]. I knew [REDACTED] quite well. I had worked with him on one or two exercises in the past. And I was at Camp Bucca for awhile as the Brigade S-2, but didn't have any work dealings with him.

No rating scheme was established after I took over as the XO. I discussed it with [REDACTED] that I wouldn't have the time to be the rater or senior rater. So we did not change any of the rating schemes.

I have no knowledge of the working dogs being used inside the hard site for interrogation or intimidation techniques. [REDACTED] from the 320th MP S-3 shop pulled out the

manuals and worked out a schedule with the dog handlers that would cover the battalion's needs.

I am aware of the provisions of the AR 190-8 that direct that the Geneva Convention must be posted in the camps in languages of detainees and military personnel. I am also aware that anyone having interaction with or handling of EPWs or detainees is also held to these provisions. I never saw these Geneva Convention posted, but I know that we had copies of Geneva 3 for EPW in Arabic that we had gotten a good stockpile of and brought into theater. Most of the supplies of Geneva 3 text that we had were exhausted at Camp Bucca.

I would adjust two things for training. I would realign the mission to a small extent and I would adjust the training to focus more heavily on the security internee operations in a area forward of the divisional rear area. Everything we had done prior was focused on the Geneva categories of internees. The adjustment to the mission is get rid of the prison mission. Incarceration is not what IR battalions and brigades are about.

Step one, let's put the leadership back in command. Put [REDACTED] back in command and give him an XO that will be there for the entire time. Put the company commander and the first sergeant and his ops NCO back in position. And the shift NCOIC who allowed that to happen on his watch should be tried at court martial along with all his soldiers who participated, whether they are MI or not. I'm convinced that what happened in Pod 1A would never have happened if Master [REDACTED] at Camp Bucca had been court martialed promptly, as was recommend by the battalion and brigade, you never would have had another incident after that. What she did was a crime and she should have been made to pay for it. The incident at 115th at Camp Cropper that I was the 15-6 Investigating Officer on, 1AD never investigated it. I recommended court martial as the Investigating Officer. Brigade forwarded it with a recommendation and it came back to give them an Article 15.

I would also suggest that training requirements should also include an MI directed block of instruction on the Interrogation Rules of Engagement. We have had Rules of Engagement instruction by the SJA. Also the Geneva Convention again.

Witness was warned and excused, subject to recall.

[The session ended at 1708 hours, 14 February 2004.]