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University of Central Florida

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**THE END OF U.S. MILITARY DETAINEE
OPERATIONS
AT ABU GHRAIB, IRAQ**

by

MICHAEL C. ALLGOOD
B.S. University of Central Florida, 2000
M.S. University of Central Florida, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies
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ABSTRACT

Operation Iraqi Freedom launched with the backing of U.S. Coalition Forces (CF) on March 20, 2003 to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The United States occupied Iraq by bombing and cleansing Iraq of weapons (Dahabour 105-130). During the first year of occupation U.S. soldiers at the detention facility Abu Ghraib tortured detainees in their charge. This torture becomes known to the public through worldwide media coverage in May 2004. My thesis will cover my service as a Military Police officer (MP) at Abu Ghraib from December 2005-August 2006. During my tour of duty at Abu Ghraib I was required to complete the military goals for success which conflicted with some of my own beliefs and moral values.

In this thesis I write an autobiographical description of my nine months of duty as an MP at the U.S. military Forward Operating Base (FOB) Abu Ghraib. I use my own photographs to recreate the environment as vividly as possible for my story. This thesis helps to explain some of the frustrations that U.S. military personnel experience. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) needs to conduct, and implement research on how to prevent military personnel from torturing detainees. After the research is conducted the DOD needs to implement that research in detainee operations. That includes a need for more realistic detainee operations training that emphasizes not torturing detainees, and it should be the standard for all the U.S. military branches.

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INTRODUCTION

The geographic boundaries of Iraq were established in 1918 after the British military defeated the Ottoman Empire in World War I. The British maintained control of Iraq from 1918-1932. In 1932 the British government gave full control of Iraq to a monarchy installed by them after World War I. In 1958 Iraq became a republic after the monarchy was overthrown by a joint Bath (Revivalist) party and military coup. The military pushed the Bath party aside. The military dictatorship ended when the Bath political party came back into power in 1968. Saddam Hussein had been a member of the Bath party from the very beginning in 1958. He moved up in the Bath party and eventually became Vice - President of Iraq. By July 1979, Saddam Hussein had gained full political control of the Bath party and the Presidency of Iraq (Farouk-Sluglett et al. 1-205).

Iraq invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1991. The United States responded by conducting a ground war that lasted 100 days in February of 1991 (Finlan 81). The U.S. military then spent the next twelve years in sporadic military clashes with the regime of Saddam Hussein. The Bathist regime of Iraq continuously resisted United Nations (UN) ceasefire terms negotiated at the end of the 1991 Gulf War (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>).

The United States installed a new policy of pre-emptive strikes after the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington DC. In the fall of 2002 the U.S. demanded that Iraq follow the terms of the UN 1991 ceasefire resolutions. These resolutions allowed UN inspectors to search for weapons of mass destruction. By the end of 2002 the U.S. government was not satisfied with the Iraqi response to the UN weapons inspectors. The U.S. responded by launching

a U.S. lead Coalition Forces ground invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003 (Knights 292-301).

The English translation of Abu Ghraib is varied. Abu means father of the banished, excelled, and strange. Abu Ghraib is also translated as father of the surrounding land area. Abu Ghraib prison land size consists of approximately 100 square acres and was built by the British in the 1950s. The Iraq government is known to have held up to 50,000 detainees at Abu Ghraib during peak numbers (Delgado, 227).

The United States military took control of Abu Ghraib after the defeat of the Iraqi military in May 2003. The U.S. military held an average of 7,000 detainees at Abu Ghraib. Members of the various insurgent groups attacking Coalition Forces became the detainees at Abu Ghraib. The first year of occupation is the same year that detainees were tortured by U.S. Army personnel. The world learned of the torture through the news media the next year.

The torturing of detainees is a terrible event that brings shame on the U.S. military. The lessons of Abu Ghraib should not be forgotten by the U.S. government. If those terrible acts of torture are forgotten then they are likely to be repeated again. The United States cannot expect our own captured military prisoners to be treated humanely when we treat other nation's citizens with disrespect. It is in our national self interest to be held to a higher standard in the treatment of detainees. People should be treated with respect because that is just how a person should be treated regardless of their beliefs.

The U.S military, like many others in the world, have their own set of rules and standards. The moral codes and laws that are followed by military members are not necessarily always the same as those followed by the rest of society. A conscientious

objector from the Florida Army National Guard wrote the following about the U.S. Army: “In the army things work very differently from the outside world, where there’s a good and a bad way to do most things. In the army there’s simply the army way” (Mejia, 117).

Not every soldier agrees with the army way despite volunteering to serve for military duty. Views on killing people in combat change over time. Even though a person may have agreed to kill if necessary when initially joining the military, later on a conscientious objector may not want to kill when actually in combat, believing it is morally wrong. At that point it is too late because the military is not a regular job that a person can quit when they disagree with the organization’s work. Each soldier signs a contract and there are consequences for not following the terms.

When an individual joins the U.S. military they are obligated initially to a contract for a total of eight years of military service. If a military member who joined the active U.S. Army for four years decides not to reenlist, that member will still be obligated to service in the Inactive Regular U.S. Army Reserve (IRR) for another four years, to complete their eight years of military service. In IRR status an individual does not have to attend weekend drills but they can be called to annual training as well as active U.S. Army service during wartime. That is how the U.S. government is able to not have the draft for conflicts like Operation Iraqi Freedom. The U.S. government just recalls IRR military personnel back to active duty. So even if someone has been out of the active military, and is now against violence, that person is still subject to recall to war if they are in the IRR.

The U.S. Army rules and regulations must be readily available to be understood. If those rules and regulations are not clearly understood by everyone in the military then problems arise, such as, the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib by the U.S Army Military Police (MP) in 2003. Abuse is less likely to occur with a clear set of rules. The invasion of Iraq is a military success but the occupation is less successful. Poor training of military personnel on how to conduct peacekeeping operations need to be addressed.

The purpose of this thesis is to explain some of the problems that need to be addressed in how the U.S. military conducts detainee operations. These problems in detainee operations need to be addressed so torture of detainees by military personnel is less likely to occur in the future. I use a literature review to explain what occurred at Abu Ghraib before I arrived. I then document some of the events I experienced as an MP at Abu Ghraib. Pictures of different areas of Abu Ghraib are included to help give a visualization of what life is like there. In my thesis I conclude that the U.S. military needs to give training on the humane treatment of detainees.

CHAPTER 1 ~ LITRATURE REVIEW



Figure 1~ Inner Wall

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with thirty articles. Article's 5 and 30 are the two articles that relate to the treatment of detainees captured in warfare.

Article 5: No one shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 30: Nothing in this declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein (Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

The significance of the Universal Declaration of Human rights is that the U.S. government is a signatory to the document. The UN is headquartered in the United States. The U.S. government pushed for the creation of the U.N. after World War II. When the U.S. government breaks international agreements and tortures detainees it makes it harder to stop other nations in the world from harming people. Other nations may not take the United Nations (U.N.) seriously, such as the government of Sudan who has committed genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan (Cheadle 6-7).

Former President Bush concluded and had a memorandum written stating that, “the Geneva Convention Relative to the treatment of prisoners of war of August 12, 1949, did not apply to members of the Taliban and Al Qaeda” (Taft et al 284). This included any members of Al Qaeda throughout the world. If a person captured by U.S. government forces was determined to be Al Qaeda then that person could be tortured for information. On February 14, 2009 President Bush’s Office of Legal Council (OLC) wrote the legal document that authorized how the detainee tortures would be carried out (<<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>>).

The film Standard Operating Procedure claims that the U.S. government used interrogation procedures developed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on detainees at Abu Ghraib. There is a large amount of paperwork created by the U.S. government about the abuses at Abu Ghraib. There are official sworn statements from both the detainees being abused, and the military personnel that abused the detainees (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-404). Some of these documents have been made available to the public. Yet, there still is important information missing because not all of the documents have been declassified.

There seemed to be implied unofficial orders from the higher ranking officers that the detainees are not important. The military police were being told that detainees were less than human by their chain of command. Boundaries of what is acceptable treatment of detainees is pushed to the limits by the Central Intelligence Agency and private government contractor interrogators. The U.S. military chain of command did not make a clear set of standard operating procedures (SOP) to follow for the treatment of the detainees. Sworn statements seem to point to the soldiers abusing the detainees for their own amusement. The sworn statements also show a lack of supervision by the higher ranking supervisors (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-404).

Military police have ultimate control over the detainee's daily life. When a detainee does not follow an MP's instructions or attacks, a bad outcome is possible. The combination of wanting ultimate control over a human being who is breaking the rules while wearing heavy military equipment and experiencing extreme summer temperatures can cause tempers to flare for both the MPs and detainees.

There is an issue of command and control that took place during the abuses in 2003 because other government agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) keep ghost detainees. Ghost detainees are detainees present at the detention facility who are not in the computer system, and therefore unknown to be at Abu by the U.S. military. There needs to be one specific organization in charge of the detention facility that can keep control of all the detainees. The U.S. military needs to be in charge and not the CIA because soldiers are accountable to international treaties as demonstrated in the 2003 torture of detainees. Having ghost detainees unaccounted for caused detention facility operational accountability to be impacted (Danner 445).

Specialist Jason Kennel, who was not accused of wrongdoing at Abu, told U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Division (C.I.D.) the following: “I saw them nude, but M.I. would tell us to take away their mattresses, sheets, and clothes.” Another witness was an Iraqi Arabic language interpreter. The interpreter told the investigators, “a bunch of military intelligence people watched as inmates were subject to abuse by the military police” (Hersh 30).

A February 2004 report by the International Committee of the Red Cross noted that ill treatment usually occurs when a detainee is first arrested. A detainee is less likely to be ill-treated after arriving at a permanent detention facility (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-404). This report was released three months before the pictures of abuses by U.S. military police at the more permanent facility of Abu Ghraib were to become public in May 2004 (Woodward 150).

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) visited Abu Ghraib on 21-23 October 2003 for the February 2004 ICRC report which detailed ill-treatment of detainees. The ICRC investigators noted detainees were naked for several days. Being naked in front of strangers is uncomfortable for anyone. To the conservative Muslim culture it is considered a sinful act. Interrogators can use nakedness to make the person they are questioning feel more vulnerable.

The ICRC makes note of detainees in prolonged stress positions such as squatting or standing with their arms in the air for prolonged periods, and sleep deprivation by the use of loud music (Otterman 166). The hard site was the concrete prison building complex at Abu Ghraib where the prisoners who were tortured and photographed in 2003 were

kept. The ICRC decided to confidentially report its findings and concerns to the Bush administration months before the Abu Ghraib scandal became public (Gabriel 121).

It would be difficult for members of the U.S. military to stop torture if it was official U.S. government policy. Being discharged from the military for not following orders can make it difficult to find employment. All an employer will know is that the person applying for a job with their organization has been dishonorably discharged from the military. “Investigators in the military are all a part of the U.S. Army chain of command. These entities cannot be expected to watch critically and correct the system upon which their careers depend” (Feinman 57-80).

Military life is stressful and these stressful conditions can cause members to feel overwhelmed. Stressed out military personnel can become physically violent against their superiors, peers, or subordinates (Bryant 132). Throughout the history of military operations there has been torture of detainees by various military forces throughout the world. One example that closely resembles the U.S. experience in Iraq is the French experience in Algeria of the 1950s. The French resorted to torture of Algerians, and this shows us that other democracies besides the United States can resort to mistreatment of detainees. The German Gestapo tortured the French in a building in Algeria named the Rue des Saussaies, fifteen years before the French tortured the Algerians in the same building in the 1950s (Deeley 40).

Detainee operations are planned by higher ranking officials and are carried out by the lower ranking enlisted military members. At Abu Ghraib there are long duty hours, the wearing of heavy combat gear, and the blazing hot desert summers. The insurgent forces figure out the U.S. military weaknesses and then use various weapons to try to hurt and

kill U.S service members. The torture of Iraqi citizens is harmful to the U.S. military's goal of gaining the support of the Iraqi people.

In the 1950s the response to the French torture of Algerians is the growth of an insurgency and increased attacks on French soldiers. The eventual outcome is the complete withdrawal of the French military in 1962. In the French-Algerian occupation thousands of French military personnel died, along with hundreds of thousands of Algerians. Even though the French are a democratic government, they decide to ignore the Geneva and UN provisions against torture (Heggoy 237). The result of that decision is the loss of control in Algeria. In the Global War on Terrorism the U.S. government relied on torture to extract information, similar to what the French did in their 1950s occupation of Algeria (Sartre 101).

Sigmund Freud wrote about the "narcissism of minor differences" that reinforces human beings inclination to aggression, and indifference to strangers (Brooks 39-52). The military is aggressive in their training of personnel. It starts when they first enter the service through basic training. Military members are taught to be indifferent to others because they need to be able to kill an enemy military force. This aggressive reinforcement is good for warfare but not so good in occupation and peacekeeping.

A study on prison behavior is conducted on August 1971 at Stanford University's psychology building called The Stanford Prison Experiment which had students volunteer to play the role of guards and prisoners. Due to abusive behavior, the experiment had to be ended early. It lasted only six days even though it was supposed to last twice as long. During the study prisoners were only known by their number similar to the operation of Abu Ghraib. In the study the prisoners rip off identification numbers and barricade

themselves in their cells (Zimbardo VHS). While I was at Abu Ghraib as an MP detainees also ripped off their identification numbers. The student guards wore uniforms, sunglasses, carried clubs, and hand cuffs. At Abu MPs wore uniforms, sunglasses, carried clubs, and plastic zip tie cuffs.

When detainees were tortured at Abu Ghraib in 2003 they were stripped naked for long periods of time for interrogation, punishment, or for sadistic amusement of the MPs. Similar to what occurred at Abu Ghraib in 2003, students in the Stanford University experiment used nudity as punishment without direction (Zimbardo VHS).

The Stanford Prison Experiment detailed how the guards insult the prisoners, are aggressive, and even threaten the prisoners. A majority of the student guards enjoy their newfound power. The few guards that are nice to the detainees did it out of a need to be liked by everyone. None of the nicer student guards interfere with the more sadistic treatment of the volunteer prisoners (Zimbardo VHS).

The Stanford Prison Experiment shows that average people with college educations can turn into sadistic prison guards. Similarly average people with college educations who are innocent of any crimes will allow themselves to be humiliated. The student prison guards' abnormal behavior was due to their being in an environment that supported their behavior. The student guards did things that are considered abnormal for civilized, educated people. The Stanford Prison Experiment shows that sadistic behavior can occur within a few days. Most of the abusive behavior occurred on the night shift when the guards thought nobody was watching (Zimbardo VHS). This is similar to what occurred with the torturing of detainees by MPs at Abu Ghraib in 2003 (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-404).

U.S. military MP personnel at Abu Ghraib in 2003 had a combination of factors that contributed to the possibility of torture occurring. This included a long tour of duty away from loved ones in a dangerous environment, along with the stressful possibility of being killed by insurgent fighters. A lack of training that did not emphasize avoiding the mistreatment and torture of detainees. Add in a lack of supervision of the night shift MP personnel and there should have been no surprise that some of the MPs tortured their detainees in 2003 at the Abu Ghraib Detention Facility.

CHAPTER 2 ~ INVASION AND OCCUPATION



Figure 2 ~ Invasion

The U.S. government invades Iraq to find weapons of mass destruction that are proved to be non-existent. Then the strategy is changed to making a democracy in the undemocratic Arab Middle East. Occupation is a very serious act that causes alienation of civilians and soldiers alike, and a lasting trauma for all the people involved (Lazreg 206).

Conflict is carried out by many nations throughout the world for many reasons. At the Nuremberg trials after World War II, former Nazi leader Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering replied to a psychological evaluation question from Captain Gilbert, a U.S. Army military intelligence officer who had a PhD in psychology. His statement was in

reply to Captain Gilbert's question about various forms of government motivating their citizens to go to war.

“Naturally, the common people do not want war. That is understood. But after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism and exposing the nation to danger (Gilbert 278).”

Iraq invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990. The U.S. military formed a military coalition that pushed Iraq forces out of Kuwait in the winter of 1991. Iraq signs a cease fire and agrees to two no fly zones in northern and southern Iraq. Iraq agreed to destroy any weapons of mass (WMD) destruction, and to allow the United Nations (UN) weapons inspections to ensure that the WMD were destroyed. After the 1991 Gulf War Iraq continued to tangle with the U.S military, mostly with U.S Air Force fighter planes enforcing the 1991 ceasefire rule that Iraq aircraft do not operate in northern or southern Iraq (Cordesman 2).

The UN weapons inspection teams were constantly looking for weapons of mass destruction. The UN inspection team had team members who were from the United States. In March 22, 1999 the Washington Post, reported in detail that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was attaching spies to weapons inspection teams. Three years later on September 8, 2002 the Washington Post reported that the Iraqi regime was

stalling UN weapons inspectors with false accusations of the U.S. government implanting CIA spies within the inspection teams Solomon et al. 123-124).

Former Vice-President Dick Cheney in an August 26, 2002 speech at a national convention of Veterans of Foreign Wars asserted, “There is no doubt that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction (Ricks 49).” Planning for the invasion of Iraq had begun two months after the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York City and Washington, DC (Ricks 32). By mid-August 2002 a top secret report on an Invasion of Iraq was given to President Bush to sign. The U.S. would now plan a war to bring a democratic government to Iraq that hopefully would be a demonstration of U.S. military power. War planning continued and U.S. military forces were mobilized and sent to the Arabian Peninsula. On March 20, 2003 the ground war would began (Gordon et al. 72).

The U.S. military believed that invasion of Iraq would be relatively easy with little resistance. Intelligence was showing that the Iraqi military was no big threat to U.S. military firepower. As the U.S. military pushed in Iraq irregular fighters wearing civilian clothing were giving stiff resistance. Commanders believed that the Iraqi fighters would only be defending the metropolitan areas.

To the surprise of U.S. commanders these irregular fighters were attacking military supply convoys with civilian vehicles. The Iraqi regular military forces are adapting to U.S. military radio jamming by using cell phones to give military orders. In Iraq cities irregular fighters are executing hit and run attacks on passing U.S. military forces. These plain clothes fighters in many instances would get so close to U.S. military tanks that when the irregulars are firing their Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs), their RPGs would not have time to arm, and would bounce off the tanks. These Iraqi irregular fighters in

plain civilian clothes are a taste of what the U.S. military experienced with insurgents later during the occupation. On May 5, 2003, combat operations are officially ended, and the occupation of Iraq now begins (Knights 292).

At first the U.S. government wanted to have Iraqis run Iraq. Then the U.S. government believed there were still too many pro-Saddam Bath party loyalists in the new Iraqi government. In response, the U.S. decides to take over full responsibility for running Iraq. The U.S. government is authorized by the UN on May 22, 2003 to run Iraq with something called the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). The CPA is headed by U.S. citizens and President Bush appointee Paul Bremer as chief administrator. The CPA removes almost all the former Iraqi government administrators and disbands the Iraqi military. Iraq had unemployment of 30-50 percent before the U.S. military invaded. The unemployment percentages rise a lot more because of the removal of the Iraqi government administrators along with a half million former Iraq military members (Allawi 106-130).

The CPA was having problems with corruption and mismanagement. Even when facilities such as water and power stations were run properly, problems with theft continued. In 2004 a problem with insurgent attacks and sabotage begins to disrupt the Iraqi infrastructure. The CPA authority is handed over to an interim Iraq government on June 2, 2004. Even though Iraqis were now in charge of Iraq, insurgent attacks against U.S. lead Coalition Forces (CF) were still increasing (Allawi 260-286).

The occupation by the U.S. military has emboldened some Iraqi people to become insurgent fighters. The various insurgent groups have different goals for political control of Iraq. However, what they have in common is that they all generally want the U.S.

military to leave Iraq. The insurgents are upset that Iraq is being occupied by an outside non-Muslim military force (Allawi 260-286).

Even if the force that occupies is Muslim, there is still the question of what type of Muslim. Shiite and Sunni Muslims differ on their interpretation of the Koran. These two groups differ on which one of Muhammad's descendants is supposed to control a Muslim based government. Sunni Muslims believe that all four generations of the leadership after Mohammed's successors are the rightful leaders of all Muslims. Shiites believe that Muhammad's descendant Ali, who was killed by Sunnis and his clan who were defeated in two civil wars in 661 and 689 are the true religious leaders of all Muslims. The animosity between the two Muslim religious groups, Sunni and Shiite, is over a thousand years old (Demant 10-15).

Pictures of torture at Abu Ghraib incited both the Sunni and Shiite religious groups to work against U.S. military forces. Some Iraqi people joined the insurgents. The growing numbers of insurgents added to the religious tensions. It became worse than when the photos of abuse at Abu Ghraib were first in the international media. After the torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib by MPs in 2003 was discovered, a U.S. Army investigation was conducted. This investigation determined that the military commanders should have paid more attention to the relationship between military personnel and detainees. Military personnel morale and command climate was generally good throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. Military personnel who conducted detainee operations in remote and dangerous locations such as Abu Ghraib had bad morale. Military personnel at Abu Ghraib were unhappy because they felt that their higher level commanders did not care about their situation (Danner 357).

The torturing of detainees at Abu Ghraib is another factor that increased the insurgency. Muslim culture in regards to showing a nude body is more conservative than American culture. Therefore, naked pictures of prisoners in humiliating positions are considered even more degrading than the average person's reaction. The occupation of a Muslim land by Christian military forces angers the insurgents. Now seeing their fellow insurgents degraded by the occupying forces added to their hatred of the U.S. military occupation of Iraq. At Abu Ghraib, insurgent mortar shelling is a common occurrence. However, the attacks had little chance of helping a detainee escape. Some of the attacks even injured, or killed detainees.

Both the Shiite and Sunni insurgents attack non-insurgent Iraqis in the hopes of bringing about chaos. The insurgent groups hope to gain political control of Iraq from a weak Iraqi government unable to control the chaos. The insurgent groups attack U.S. military personnel to attempt to force the U.S. government to leave Iraq, making it easier for the insurgent groups attempting to destabilize the Iraqi government to gain political control. In 2008 the insurgent attacks decreased because of increased cooperation with local government (West 349). Instead of arresting insurgents, the U.S. military has been employing insurgents as Iraqi security forces. The U.S. military also had a new program of "pledge and release" in which families of the prisoners were involved in an insurgent's rehabilitation. Involving family members in the release process was keeping the re-arrest rate at less than one percent (West 349). As the U.S. military begins to withdraw from Iraq, these insurgent fighters will either work with the Iraqi government peacefully, or they will restart a new wave of violence in a grab for political power.

CHAPTER 3 ~ MY FIRST TOUR OF IRAQ



Figure 3 ~ University of Baghdad at Christmas 2003

The volunteer military is a very diverse group of people. People's reasons for joining the military vary from pure patriotism, to wanting to better their lives. Some also want a steady income and retirement. Other people may join because they cannot afford to pay for college without the GI Bill. Joining is also is a way to get out of lower income neighborhoods for better opportunities (Wright 24).

My reasons are all of the above. When I graduated from high school there was not much opportunity for me because the 1992 economic recession was particularly bad in California. It was not an option to stay where I lived and I had to find a way to support myself. I first joined the U.S. Army for two years to get the GI Bill to help me pay for college.

After I completed my two years of active duty, I still had a six year obligation in the Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR). IRR requires no service except possibly at annual drills or in times of war. All initial contracts add up to eight years. Instead of just being in the IRR, I enlist in the National Guard for the tuition and monthly income. Near the end of my contract with the Florida Army National Guard (FANG), I found out that I have to repay almost ten thousand dollars FANG paid for my college classes. I was unaware that I had to stay in the FANG for three years after using the tuition scholarship, so I re-enlisted in FANG in 2000.

On New Year's Eve of 2002 I am at the University of Central Florida reading books in the library and then working out at the gym. In the afternoon I go to my apartment near the university and there is a note on the door from the Orange County Sherriff's Department. It tells me to call my National Guard unit. I find out that I'm being called up to report by New Year's morning. The FANG unit I am transferred to is over three hundred miles away in the Florida panhandle.

My first time in Iraq is with the Headquarters Company of the 3-124th Infantry Battalion of the Florida Army National Guard. There are two books that I have read written by people from my specific unit during my first deployment. One book, The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell, is written by an enlisted infantry soldier John Crawford. The other book, Chasing Ghosts, is written by an officer Paul Rieckhoff who is the director and founder of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and who was also in my battalion. I never got to know either person, though I did read their books.

The books written by these two men help me remember what I experienced during my first time in Iraq. My tour of duty outside the United States begins when my unit is in

Kuwait guarding military equipment. Everyone is happy except for the higher ranking officers who want their infantry badge and awards. We are only supposed to be in Kuwait for six months. The battalion commander drives into Iraq with the assistant commander to find us a combat mission. They attach themselves to some military convoys for protection. They find us a mission and thus in the month of April we get into our trucks to convoy into Iraq. We are a headquarters support company that is now expected to do infantry combat duties.

An Iraqi child runs out in front of my vehicle right when our unit crosses the border into Iraq. I swerve around him and avoid hitting him with the 2.5 ton military truck that has a trailer attached. We have been warned not to stop because the Iraqi military is using children to stop and attack U.S. Military convoys. As we enter the capital city of Baghdad I am on a road that leads into the main city center. I notice almost every building on each side of the road is leveled for a few kilometers. Moreover the buildings behind those buildings looked like Swiss cheese from 50 caliber machine gun rounds. When we enter Baghdad half our unit gets lost. I am on the lost half and we end up driving through a crowded farmers market full of surprised Iraqi citizens. Despite the mix up, everyone arrives safely at the little compound. That compound will end up being home for the next year of our lives.

There are many times that I thought I might die during my first time in Iraq. One is on November 11, 2003 it is Veterans Day, my birthday. I am on guard duty at the rear gate when I hear a large explosion and see smoke on the other side of the wall near the compound entrance. On the radio somebody yells, "Open the gate." I run to the gate to open it and the medics drive by. Specialist Robert Wise has been hurt in a roadside

explosion. A U.S. Army helicopter arrives to pick up Specialist Wise. I see the battalion surgeon walking towards me and he has the most depressed look. He is usually a very upbeat person. I learn later that day that Specialist Wise has died because of a loss of too much blood.

We are driving around because the military is worried about insurgent attacks on Christmas day that do not materialize. Later that night I am told to get a truck and a tow bar. The Brigade Sergeant Major's truck was disabled by a roadside bomb. The Brigade Sergeant Major is the highest ranking person in the enlisted non-officer ranks. Sergeant Major Cook is in charge of many of the U.S. Soldiers stationed in Baghdad, Iraq in 2003. I hook up the truck and drag the truck on its rims down the road. I won't stop for anything, even if the sparks start flying and the rims fall off. I am not going to let that truck become a prize for the insurgents. Sergeant Major Cooke is killed from the shrapnel of the roadside bomb and that is my Christmas evening 2003 in Baghdad.

CHAPTER 4 ~ MY SECOND TOUR OF IRAQ



Figure 4 ~ Coalition Hind Helicopters at Abu Ghraib

When I get back from my first deployment from Iraq in 2004 I am sent back to my original National Guard unit. At my unit I get a temporary job repairing military trucks. My FANG unit is deploying to Iraq, and we go on full time U.S. Army active duty status on Thursday August 25, 2005. My unit converts from a multiple launch rocket unit into a military police unit. Since we do not have enough soldiers for a military police unit, we receive some soldiers from a FANG air defense unit (ADA). These ADA soldiers are attached to my unit similar to how I was attached to another unit on my first tour of duty in Iraq in 2003.

When we first get to Fort Dix, NJ, we do various paperwork and medical exams for several days. I do my medical paperwork at the same hospital that I was born in when Fort Dix was a full time active duty U.S. Army base. The base hospital is now a clinic and only the first floor is being used because Fort Dix is now a part-time army reserve base.

The Army wants to make training as severe as possible. Attacks are carried out by fake insurgent actors almost every night. Simulated attacks are done with fake gun fights. There are also fake mortars that just make loud boom sounds and whistle before they explode. Real mortars do not make whistling noises; they just go quietly through the air and explode when they hit the ground. About halfway through the training at Fort Dix, one soldier who does not want to go to Iraq attempts suicide and is almost successful. We never see that soldier again. Our unit trains all day, then we have guard duty in the evening. Life at Fort Dix is rough. We sleep in tents, the outside temperatures are near freezing, and the showers usually have no hot water. There are no chairs in the chow hall so everyone eats their meals standing up. My U.S. Army training from 2003 and now again in 2005 is only somewhat realistic to my actual experiences of being in Iraq.

Going home is not always allowed by the U.S. Army. Even in an emergency the Iraq mission comes first. Soldiers from a Louisiana Army National Guard unit have family members missing and homeless from Hurricane Katrina. The U.S. Army does not allow the soldiers emergency leave even though their military police training is complete. They are deployed immediately to Iraq, instead of Louisiana to help their families.

Even though we are supposed to be watching detainees in Iraq, we mostly do convoy training. The purpose of convoy training is mainly avoiding simulated roadside explosions. Of our two months of training, only our last week is devoted to detainee operations. Soldiers performing detention operations need to have more in-depth detainee operations training which could make things like the 2003 torture that occurred in Abu less likely to occur in the future. U.S. Air Force security forces are also being trained for detainee operations along with our Guard unit at Fort Dix. It is apparent that the Airmen assigned to detention centers are receiving the same inadequate training for detainee operations.

Our training ends on November 11, 2005, my birthday. The weather is getting even colder. Now I am inside a real building, sleeping in a warm bed which is an improvement to cold cots outside. Before we fly out we receive a two day pass to be with family members. Going to New York and exploring Manhattan is a refreshing change of pace that ends too quickly. On November 21, 2003 our unit loads up on busses and heads to the flight line at Maguire Air Force base right next to Ft. Dix, NJ. We get on the plane and are soon in the air and crossing the Atlantic Ocean. We stop in Ireland to refuel and get a chance to check out the airport's amenities. Next, we land in Kuwait where everyone gets on busses and heads to a military base in the middle of the Kuwaiti desert.

Even though it is the middle of November, Kuwait is hot during the day and very bright. At night it is cold and very dark. The landscape of Kuwait is mainly flat like Florida. The difference is that Florida is surrounded with various green plants and trees, and in the Kuwaiti desert there are no trees and almost no plants.

The unit is going to spend two weeks in Kuwait before flying to Iraq. We have various types of training. We go to the flight line to learn how to load people with injuries on a U.S. Navy Seahawk and a U.S. Army Blackhawk helicopter. The helicopters are similar and made by the same company. They even look the same on the outside. However, the insides of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army aircrafts are made differently. We learn how to load soldiers on both types of medical evacuation helicopters quickly and safely to prevent further injury. Another reason for speed is to get a medical evacuation helicopter off the ground and in the air as fast as possible. It is not safe to be on the ground for a prolonged period.

Later that day the other part of my military unit which is assigned with the less dangerous charge of running a rest and relaxation base in Kuwait invites us to have a Thanksgiving meal. After the meal we head back to our temporary base in Kuwait. I am jealous that some of my fellow unit members have a less dangerous job. I spend the next week just watching movies and dreading going to Iraq. At the end of the week my unit loads a U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft and we fly to Baghdad International Airport (BIOP), Iraq.

On Friday December 2, 2005, my military police unit lands at Baghdad International Airport (BIOP) via a C-130 U.S. Air Force aircraft from Kuwait. We wait a few hours for the U.S. Army Chinook helicopters to fly us to Abu Ghraib. The helicopters arrive and we load up. The helicopter's back door is open with a soldier manning a 50 caliber machine gun wearing night vision goggles. Off we go into the sky; it is night and I see the lights below as our Chinook floats across the sky like a noisy ship in the air. Ten minutes pass before we are landing on the ground and unloading quickly because of the

possibility of mortars falling. We unload in a couple minutes and then the helicopter takes off and disappears into the night.

CHAPTER 5 ~ DECEMBER 2005 ENTER ABU GHRAIB



Figure 5 ~ Field Hospital next to the Abu Ghraib Helipad

When we first arrive at Abu we live in a building by the helipad. The unit we are taking over for is occupying our future living area. My living arrangements are further complicated by the up-coming elections. The building we occupy is where the detainee voting will take place. It is interesting that the detainees are deprived of their freedom because of the U.S. government. Yet, they are able to vote in elections for an Iraqi government brought about by the U.S. government. The detainees we have at Abu are not convicted of anything. If they do get convicted we hand them over to the Iraqi

government. In the end my new home is inside one of the buildings in the prison cells, while the detainees live outside in tent compounds.

Sometimes helicopters land so the pilots can eat a meal at the chow hall. That can be a foolhardy thing to do at Abu. One day, three Blackhawk helicopter crews are eating at the chow hall, when the insurgents start mortaring the airstrip. The crews run to the flight line and start up the Blackhawk helicopters and are lucky enough to make it out unscathed. There is another time the insurgents attempt to fire a missile at a landing helicopter. Thankfully, the missile misses the helicopter and ends up hitting the ground harmlessly. The helipad is used for transporting contractors, military personnel, and detainees in and out of Abu Ghraib. Most detainees are flown in because the U.S. Army considers it too dangerous to drive them on the road. The U.S. Marines are bolder and often drive in their detainees to Abu in military trucks.

Abu Ghraib is less than a ten minute helicopter ride from Fallujah. Fallujah does not have a medical surgical unit and Abu Ghraib does. That is why whenever military personnel are seriously injured in Fallujah, they are flown to Abu Ghraib instead of the main U.S. military base at Baghdad International Airport (B.I.O.P.). Most of the helicopters that land at Abu Ghraib have either detainees or injured coalition military personnel, mostly U.S Marines.

Mortars fall on Abu for two days December 7-8, 2005. I quickly get used to the mortars from insurgent fighters usually landing at Abu every other week. Mortars are explosive projectiles shot from a tube at an angle and fly in the air for a few kilometers. The projectile lands on an object or the ground and explodes. The explosion injures or even kills people within a five to ten meter radius.

My job is processing new detainees inside one of the old prison buildings. Whenever mortars land I put on my Kevlar helmet and flack vest. I think I am safe because I am inside a concrete building that also has a concrete roof. The weapons the insurgents use are mostly old Soviet era weapons. A few weeks later a mortar hits the roof of another building and explodes inside a hallway. That showed me about the power of explosives. We put on our hard Kevlar helmets and flack vests to bring the detainees outside after being entered into the U.S. Department of Defense computer system. The detainees go back to their temporary holding cells. The detainees do not get helmets or flack vests to protect them.

December 9, the next day, a convoy exits the main entrance at Abu and a suicide bomber vehicle explodes. One soldier is killed and a dozen more are wounded. The next day there is some small arms fire with AK-47 machine guns. There is a group of Iraqi citizens celebrating a soccer game by firing their weapons into the air. The guard towers fire some illumination rounds into the sky to see what is going on. Illumination rounds are fired from a tube into the air and then float down connected to little parachutes. Illumination rounds light up an area at night so military personnel can see what is going on.

When the guards fire their illumination rounds the Iraqis reply by firing at the guard towers. So the guards replied with a barrage of machine gun fire into the town next to Abu. No U.S. military personnel were hurt and the number of Iraqi deaths from the firefight is unknown. Later that night an Iraqi interpreter and his son who work at Abu are killed in retaliation for the firefight.

My MP unit is mixed in with different units. I am assigned to the battalion level military police unit from California that is in charge of my MP company unit from Florida. I am in a small room processing detainees into Abu. We get transfers, from the larger U.S. military detention facility in southern Iraq near the Kuwait border called camp Buca. We get detainees before they get released from the U.S. military run detention facilities. We also get detainees from all over Iraq that are appearing in the Iraqi court for attacking Coalition Forces. The court is headquartered in the capitol city of Baghdad near Abu Ghraib. All in-processing and releasing of detainees is handled at Abu Ghraib in the processing room I work in. I am still learning my new job which is across the base from where I am living.

During an attack you cannot really know everything that is going on. The reality is that when you are being attacked and the adrenaline kicks in you are very focused at trying to find out who is attacking you. The problem is that you get tunnel vision. Ed Fitzgerald, one of the original Green Berets and Vietnam veteran agrees with Colby Buzzel's blog from Iraq about the confusion of a firefight between U.S Army personnel and Iraqi insurgents. "In the middle of a firefight like that you can only track about 1/4 of what is happening. Maybe 1/2 of what is going on for the most experienced" (Buzzel 262-263).

I added the quotation from the U.S. Army Green Beret because it confirms the confusion I experienced in a firefight during my first tour of duty in Iraq in 2003. When you are being attacked you are trying to keep yourself and those around you from being killed. You also want to get back at the people who attacked you. So you return fire and then go out and arrest whoever is in the vicinity of the attack. Most likely the people who

attacked you have already left the scene by the time coalition military personnel arrest suspects.

Elections are held December 15th and the detainees get to vote at Abu Ghraib. During the elections, a roadside bomb is discovered outside the perimeter of Abu. The bomb explodes and slightly injures some of the explosive ordinance disposal soldiers. The day of massive violence that everyone thought was going to occur during the Iraqi elections thankfully did not come to pass.

By the end of December 2004, the weather is starting to get colder and it is nice to have a job inside a warm room. The room is not well ventilated though and many of the detainees come in not having showered for days, or even weeks, and the smell in the room can be overpowering. To get away I often volunteer to go get food for everyone during mealtimes. Spending twelve hours in the same room with the same people can be a bit too much.

Spending the holidays away from home is depressing, especially in a war zone. I spend my time going to the Morale and Welfare and Recreation (MWR) building to watch movies and forget about the holidays. I would really rather not be in Iraq during the holiday season.

CHAPTER 6 ~ JANUARY 2006



Figure 6 ~ Boxing Ring at Abu Ghraib for Military Personnel



Figure 7 ~ Basketball Court at Abu Ghraib for Military Personnel

There are not a lot of things to do for fun here. If I want to do anything I have to put on all my equipment and walk up to a mile to get to the recreational area. Our unit is all the way in the corner of the Abu Ghraib, about a kilometer away from the dining facility, the basketball court, the weight room, the movie room, the internet café, and the boxing ring. There are fights once a week in a makeshift boxing ring shown in figure 6. I usually am working but I get off one day to see the fights. The fights are military personnel beating each other up. Beforehand I never cared too much for boxing. At Abu there is not much going on so amateur boxing is a nice distraction from the misery of the present circumstances.

Another popular pastime for soldiers at Abu is basketball as shown in figure 7. Unfortunately the basketball court is outside where it gets muddy in the winter. It is too hot to play during the extreme heat of daytime during the summer. Basketball is not easily played wearing a flack vest and helmet so a person playing basketball at Abu Ghraib is left unprotected from insurgent mortar shelling.

I stick to my specific job area and my living area most of the time. I usually only eat when I am at work. On my days off I might go to the chow hall but sometimes I eat food from the Post Exchange. Even though the food is free at the chow hall, I have to get all my combat gear on and walk for ten minutes. On top of that there is the possibility that I can get hit by a falling mortar. The Post Exchange is also across the base but I can buy food there that will not spoil so it is a nice option for my days off.

Most soldiers buy their own computers to watch movies and check emails because it's too much work otherwise. I buy the same computer via the internet that we use to process detainees, a Panasonic Tough book laptop. The alternative is walking to the

recreation building to watch a movie. Unfortunately, to get to the recreation building I will have to put on all my combat gear. My gear consists of a Kevlar helmet, flack vest, bullets, an M-16 rifle with grenade launcher, and an M-9 pistol. Having a computer in my room lets me check my e-mails and watch movies without exposing myself to the outside dangers.

On New Year's morning during a detainee headcount, it is discovered that two detainees are missing. This is the first successful escape in over a year. I am on duty processing the new detainees, which is lucky for me because if I were asleep I would have to wake up and go out to look for the detainees on my less than twelve hours of rest time. Losing sleep because insurgents are attacking Abu is bad enough. Even worse is losing sleep because of weekly fake attack training exercises. In a training exercise the alarm goes off and the loudspeaker states, "This is a training exercise." In these exercises I put on all my combat gear, jump in a military truck, and drive to a fighting position on the perimeter of Abu Ghraib, and wait for the exercise to end.

I am sent up to the roof of the building where I work to see if the detainees are up there, and I stay up there until the sun rises. It is especially cold, with the temperature near freezing. The Apache helicopters are flying overhead searching with infrared optical scopes. During the actual escape the two detainees first cut through the inner fence. Second they lay out several jackets across the razor wire. Third they crawl down a ditch full of water in the freezing cold. Fourth they use a nearby ladder to go over the outer wall that surrounds Abu. For the final act the detainees disappear into the night. Even with a massive search effort the two detainees are not recovered.

Towards the end of the month some more detainees escape. One detainee is from the hard site. As explained earlier, the hard site is the place where MPs tortured and took the pictures of detainees in 2003 which caused worldwide condemnation. The hard site is now being run by the Iraqi government. Detainees convicted of attacking Coalition Forces by the Iraqi court system are placed at the hard site. Apparently the Iraqi guards left the gate of the hard site open and the convicted detainee just walked out.

In this case the U.S. military finds the detainee. The detainee is brought into my work area and is covered in mud and bleeding from his escape attempt. The detainee's identification is confirmed then he is placed into a holding cell. He is a Syrian citizen serving a ten year sentence for terrorist activities against Coalition Forces. After we process the detainee I walk out to get some fresh air. The detainee is yelling at me in perfect English that he is going to cut off my head. I just ignore him and keep on walking.

At the end of the month I get a detainee that has a PhD in Computer Science from Princeton University in the United States who is a professor at an Iraqi University. This detainee's wife had a PhD in Biochemical Engineering, and she was held for almost two years by the U.S. military on charges of being a biological weapons researcher for the old Iraqi regime. The U.S. military was under pressure to release her, so they did. Then the U.S. military arrests the husband hoping to get information from the professor about any possible hidden Iraqi biological or chemical weapons caches. The professor asks why he is being held but I do not tell him. I can be tried by a military court martial if I tell the Iraqi professor why he is being held at Abu Ghraib.



Figure 8 ~ Entrance to my Sleeping Area



Figure 9 ~ Mud on top of the Paved Road at Abu Ghraib

The rainy season is in the winter in Iraq and mud could sit for days after a rain storm. The Iraqi mud is very slippery to walk on and sticks in big heavy clumps to my boots. Whenever I am inside my living area I leave my boots in the hallway to prevent an awful mess. During a mortar attack mud makes it hard to run to a concrete shelter without slipping. The shelters are full of mud, sometimes up to my knees. During one training exercise, I am at a fighting position and the heavy military truck gets stuck in the mud. Another truck had to pull us out which took about a half hour.

A tuberculosis (TB) test is conducted, and one of the soldiers that work in my section has come up positive for TB. That soldier now has to take pills for up to a year and cannot drink any alcohol. The room I work in has poor ventilation. We receive the detainees the day before they receive their medical exams to check for medical conditions like TB. Therefore a detainee with TB has not been given a mask to protect other people. Moreover we have to take DNA cotton swab samples from their mouths. During DNA swabs some detainees with TB are breathing in our faces. So after the TB test is performed I am relieved that I did not contract TB.

CHAPTER 7 ~ THE PROCESS OF PROCESSING



Figure 10 ~ Front of Detainee Processing Area



Figure 11 ~ Detainee Processing Building

Detainee arrests are conducted by Coalition Forces. Those who do the arresting could be U.S. military personnel, another nation's military personnel, Iraqi military or Iraqi police, and even private security contractors. That arrested person, who is most likely an Iraqi citizen, is sent to Abu Ghraib to be processed into the coalition forces detention system. It is in reality a U.S. military run prison. However, there are some other nations' military personnel at Abu such as Romanian military medical personnel.

Figure 10 shows the entrance to the detainee processing area. Detainees can arrive by military trucks like those pictured above instead of by helicopter to be processed into Abu Ghraib. They have their hands zip tied in the front of their bodies. They are then unloaded and told to sit down outside the building on a concrete slab in front of the search room. The detainees are officially handed over to the MPs at Abu Ghraib. Next they are stripped naked and searched by the MPs for contraband. Immediately after the search the detainees are given their yellow jump suits and they exit the search room.

When the detainees come out of the search room they enter the hallway as shown in figure 11. Then the detainees enter one of four cell holding rooms. The rooms are the first two doors on the left and right side in the picture. They sit in that room waiting to be processed for anywhere from a few hours to a few days. There are also tents outside, if the rooms are filled up to capacity. The office where I process the new detainees into the Department of Defense computer system is on the third door on the left. After the detainees are processed they are sent to the various detention tent cities compounds made by the U.S. military that are inside Abu Ghraib.

Sometimes there are no detainees to process for various reasons. The detainees usually come in large groups and we try to process them as fast as possible so we do not

fall behind. Sometimes we are left for hours without any detainees to process.

Unfortunately everyone must stay on their twelve hour shift because the helicopters or truckloads full of detainees come in without notice.

Our group of under a dozen soldiers brings in a group of ten detainees to process. Each soldier has a specific task, although we are expected to learn everyone's job and then rotate to different jobs. All the detainees have to be fingerprinted. They have a DNA sample taken from their mouths. Then we take an iris scan of their eyes. The eye scan is used for identification like a fingerprint. Eye scans are faster than fingerprints, and even if a detainee was arrested before and changed their name, the eye scan of the iris will show that person was arrested beforehand.

As these things are being done another soldier looks at the detainees arrest files to type in the arrest information. Once the information is in a database that goes to the Pentagon and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I.), a second database is created for the military personnel detention facilities in Iraq. Almost all detainee arrest records were written up by either the U.S. military or the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The detainee also gets an Internee Serial Number (ISN). The detainee is expected to know their ISN in English. A detainee wears the ISN as a plastic band on their wrist. When the whole process is done the detainee is put back into the temporary holding cell or tent. Surprisingly almost all of the detainees are cooperative with the whole process. As previously explained, in Phillip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison experiment, the students volunteering to be prisoners give in to their captor's commands even though they are innocent (Zimbardo VHS).

When coalition forces arrest someone in Iraq they have to be identified within two weeks by international laws. We sometimes get multiple Chinook helicopter with loads of detainees in one evening. A couple of times we receive over one hundred detainees to process and only a few hours to make the two week deadline. There is only enough time to type the detainee's name into the computer, give an eye scan, and issue an ISN. We reprocess these detainees adding the rest of the information when more time is available.

When I process the detainee files and type in their information, I notice a pattern. Most of the detainees are Sunni Muslims, which was the minority religion in charge of Iraq when Saddam Husain maintained his power. The Sunni Muslims are not happy about losing power. The Sunni Muslims insurgent groups are the main attackers of U.S. military personnel in 2006. In 2003 the U.S. run Coalitional Provisional Authority (C.P.A.) was not interested in reaching out to the Sunni Muslim minority groups (Hashim 282). The Sunni Muslims are still upset about not being a part of the new government. The Sunni insurgent's roadside bomb attacks are letting the U.S. government know they are not happy with their situation in Iraq. The Shiite Muslims somewhat put up with us being in Iraq because we got rid of Saddam. Even though they represent the majority of the population, many Shiite Muslims are not sure they can keep order if coalition forces leave Iraq (Feldman 47).

Many times the Shiite Muslim detainees will say they are Sunni Muslim. This is because the Shiite Muslims are the minority detainee group at Abu Ghraib. As a result, when the detainees are first processed into Abu, the Shiite Muslim detainees are placed in the same holding cells as the Sunni Muslim detainees. The Shiite Muslims are afraid of being attacked by the majority Sunni Group. A detainee might lie about what type of

Muslim they are because they believe the U.S. military treats one group of Muslims better than the other. The U.S. military treats all the detainees the same, and the only special treatment the various religious groups receive is being separated from each other to prevent fights.

The reasons for arresting Iraqi citizens vary. Sometimes they are caught in the act of trying to set up an explosive device on the side of a roadside bomb. Usually though people are being arrested for reasons that are questionable. Often a reason for arresting someone is that a neighbor put in a tip that a certain individual is supporting the insurgency. Then the U.S. military forces will go to the home and arrest everyone inside. The documentary Taxi to the Dark Side, that won a 2007 Academy Award, investigates the killing of an Afghani taxi driver who is mistakenly pointed out as a terrorist and dies during his interrogation. Taxi points out how a false arrest and torture can occur to an innocent human being held by the U.S. government. I notice that arrests due to false witness reports to CF forces are a problem in Iraq as well. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates that 70-90 percent of prisoners at Abu Ghraib are arrested by mistake through systematic roundups in neighborhoods (Feinman 57-80).

The problem is that most of the detainees are most likely innocent and did not attack coalition forces. I know from my previous deployment to Iraq right after the invasion in 2003 that emotions can run high. For example, it was upsetting when Sergeant Major Cook was killed by a roadside bomb. My infantry unit arrested everyone near the explosion (Rieckhoff 235). For the Iraqi men arrested being wrongly accused, held for months, and not being able to support a family is upsetting. Arresting innocent Iraqi

people creates overcrowding. Overcrowding creates an unsafe environment for both the detainees and the military police.

Some of the detainees in 2006 had been in the U.S. military run Abu Ghraib since the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces in March of 2003. That is up to three years for those detainees waiting to be found guilty or released. Almost all detainees are accused of being in or supporting the insurgency. The former Iraqi government Bath party members are mostly at Camp Cropper near Baghdad International Airport.

Whenever Abu Ghraib is overcrowded, the Combined Review and Release Board (CRRB) release detainees' en mass. The CRRB is a joint U.S and Iraqi board that is similar to a grand jury in the United States. The CRRB decides if the case against a detainee looks strong enough to bring to an Iraqi court. When the CRRB has mass releases due to overcrowding, the U.S. military public affairs office announces the mass release to the international news media as a sign of success in Iraq. Up to 500 detainees at one time can be released. The problem is that 500 new detainees are replacing those 500 detainees that are being released.

The majority of detainees accused of being insurgents are being released by the CRRB without appearing before an Iraqi court. Coalition forces are arresting too many suspect insurgents. Since I am in the processing office that releases and accepts detainees, I know when the CRRB and the Iraqi court system release accused insurgents. These large catch and release patterns seems to show that many of those being arrested as suspected insurgents are most likely people not involved in the insurgency.

Detainees in Iraq spend an average of four to six months in the U.S. run detention system before the CRRB either releases them or sends a detainee's case to the Iraqi court

system. If the CRRB decides to release a detainee, the CRRB notifies the Coalition Forces (CF) military unit that arrested the detainee of their ruling. The specific CF military unit that arrested a particular detainee can appeal the CRRB's decision to release that person. If that happens then the detainee's case is reviewed by the CRRB to see if the detainee should not be released. While the detainee waits for the CF military appeal, they remain in custody of the U.S. run detention system.

When the CRRB sends a detainee's case to the Iraqi court system, an Iraqi prosecutor decides whether or not to pursue the case. If the prosecutor decides to prosecute the case, it goes in front of an Iraqi judge. The Iraqi judge decides if the case is either dropped or goes to trial. If the case is dropped, then the detainee is sent back to the CRRB for release from the U.S. run detention system.

The DNA and fingerprints gathered helps identify a suspected terrorist who might try and enter the United States. The problem is that every detainee processed is now in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense databases. Most of the detainees will be found not guilty and released. The computer files that the U.S. government holds will keep the detainee's information as a suspected terrorist, even when found innocent. Anyone who has their biographical information entered into the detainee computer database and wants to become a U.S citizen will find it close to impossible. Processing in new detainees and looking at arrest files has taught me a lot about criminal evidence collection. I can sometimes tell the deference between a professional file with solid evidence against a suspected insurgent versus a person who is just rounded up.

I am starting to gain weight at an alarming pace. I spend twelve hours a day processing detainees and by the time I am done with that, I am too tired to work out. Some people are able to work in the compounds with all their combat gear on and then go to the gym and work out. They are usually younger than I am. Some of them are also the type of people that are self-motivated, even in the worst of situations. There are civilians and military personnel who have the type of jobs where they are bored because they work eight hours a day, or less, leaving them plenty of time to exercise. I am just tired all the time and depressed about my job as an MP and thousands of miles away from home processing Iraq citizens as detainees who are often not insurgents. The days are starting to run all together for me. It seems like one day is similar to the next almost like the movie Groundhog Day with the actor Bill Murray. As in the movie, everyday is the same as the next, and no matter what I do the next day it is the same as the day before.

CHAPTER 8 ~ FEBRUARY



Figure 12 ~ Detainee Compound Main Gate

My job at the detainee processing center ends. In the month of February I am transferring to where the detainees are kept outside in tents. I am now going to be sent to the detention tent compound. I begin my new job in the detention compound facilities towards the end of February. Figure 12 shows the entrance to the detainee compound where I am working. On my first day I am on rover duty. A rover walks around to make sure a detainee does not escape and assists the other military police in the daily care of a detainee. The following is my typical shift as a rover. At 12:30 p.m. I hop on a truck with some other soldiers. It takes us to the MP briefing inside the post chapel. I get a half hour daily briefing which starts at 1:00 p.m. From the guard mount I hop in the truck again, ride the truck to the detention tent compound for another briefing, and then relieve the MP shift on duty.

I officially start my twelve hour shift at 2 p.m. I walk around the tents to make sure the detainees do not escape. I check for other things such as making sure the detainees have not been digging a hole under the chain link fence. I check that the barbed wire has all the barbs. The sharp wire can be used as a weapon. I check that the chain link of the fence is fully attached to the fence poles. If the wires that attach the chain link are missing the detainees can pull up the fence for an escape attempt.

Each tent has a fence around it. Then there is another fence around all the tents in my section of the detention facility with guard towers behind the second fence. Then there is a concrete wall that is almost two stories high with barbed wire on the inside so a detainee cannot climb it very easily. Then there is the final wall that is three stories tall. There is a row of guard towers keeping detainees inside and another row of guard towers keeping attackers out of Abu.

I walk around the tents over and over again. I am looking for any signals that the detainees may be trying to escape, such as a hole dug under the fence. Around 3:00 p.m. there is a truck that sucks up a wastewater pond in each tent area. The detainees get showers every three days and a large water container to wash their hands and for drinking. I have to escort the contractors that drive the large tanker. There are 14 tents in my section of the compound. Each tent has an average of 28 detainees. My protection against the 28 detainees is a 12 gage shotgun with nonlethal plastic pellet rounds. Around 4:00 p.m. the other suck truck arrives and sucks the human waste from the port a potties. Needless to say that is a stinky job.

Around 4:30 p.m. I get into a military truck and go to the chow hall to get dinner for the dozen other guards on my shift. I get back and hand out dinner and then eat my own.

Around 5:30 the detainees' dinners arrive. I get a group of detainees together and they put the food on individual plates and help hand the food out to each tent. Usually I have the group of detainees pick up the trash but today I am rotated to the guard tower.

So I head to the guard shack and drop off my non-lethal shotgun and pick up my M-16 machine gun with lethal rounds. Then I head up to the guard tower for a four hour shift watching the detainees. I am inside a wood structure that is on top of two shipping containers. The two shipping container are stacked on top of each other. My job is now to make sure no detainees get through the fence and make a report on the radio if I see a detainee trying to escape. I am also to report detainees trying to communicate with each other via hand signals, or rock notes which are pieces of paper with a note wrapped around the rock. The rock note is thrown to another tent with various messages such as we are going to riot at lunch. Riots occur for various reasons, the main one being to cover an escape attempt.

I also have some non-lethal weapons to back up my lethal M-16 rifle. Non-lethal weapons for riot control include items such as grenades full of over a hundred paintballs pellets that explode in a 360 degree spray of rainbow colors or flash grenades which make a flash and loud noise. Flash grenades are meant to disorient someone for a few seconds. Finally, I have a paintball gun with a dozen magazines and hundreds of little pink colored paintball pellets.

It is cold up in the guard tower. The heaters were taken out of all the guard towers as group punishment when some guards fell asleep and a detainee was able to escape. Some commanders in the military like to dole out both individual and group punishments when a soldier does not follow army regulations.

At 10 p.m. my shift ends and another soldier replaces me in the guard tower. I go back down to the command shack to put my rifle in the weapons cabinet and I pick up a wood baton. I can choose a shotgun, paintball gun, or baton. I like the baton because if another detainee somehow grabs it he will only be able to hit me. The shotgun has plastic pellet rounds that is less lethal than standard shotgun rounds. At close range of three meters, or ten feet, the rounds can puncture the skin and kill a detainee. Therefore, the non-lethal shotgun is not supposed to be fired within three meters of a detainee.

We are supposed to have a shotgun shell already in the chamber, ready to fire. When riots occur I pump the shotgun to get the detainees to stop rioting. Pumping a shotgun is usually an effective tool at stopping a small single tent uprising. The detainees hear the shotgun make a pumping sound and then they run inside the tent. Just pumping a shotgun threat is so effective that I did not have to fire my non-lethal shotgun once while I was at Abu.

The paintball gun is safer and more accurate but it can only hit one detainee at a time. Paintball guns also do not scare the detainees during a riot and some of the detainees even think the paintball guns are some kind of toy gun. The shotguns are real shotguns with two types of less lethal rounds, either multiple small plastic pellet rounds, or single rubber projectile rounds. Shotguns do have some issues such as they are not very effective weapons for long distances. Paintball guns can carry 15 plastic pellets filled with paint and are less lethal rounds. The paintball rounds are mainly effective for marking what detainee was disobeying an MP's instructions in a crowded general detainee population tent compound.

I start to walk around the tents again to make sure the detainees do not escape. It is quiet now. At 10 p.m. there is a final headcount and then curfew is in effect and the detainees go inside their tents to go to sleep. They can only come out to use the rest room, get emergency medical attention, or for assistance from an MP if a fight breaks out. Fights usually occur because one of the detainees is Shiite Muslim inside a Sunni Muslim tent or a Sunni Muslim inside a Shiite tent. The detainees are supposed to let us know what kind of Muslim they are, but sometimes they do not.

As the night progresses I will keep walking around the tents making sure none of the detainees escape. The tents are lined up in two rows of seven. There is a walkway behind each row of seven tents. In the middle of the two rows there is a dirt road that is muddy this time of year. The two rows of seven tents both face the muddy road. There are three other compounds just like this one. Each 14 tent compound holds 300-400 detainees for a total of 1,200 -1,600 detainees. Then there are other areas that have general population of 500 detainees in each area. Those general population areas hold around 5,000 detainees. There is an area with around 200 non-Iraqi foreign fighters. There are two tents for those that come in with medical issues. Then there is a segregated area for those that do not follow the detention center rules. The total number of detainees averages 7,000. The number of detainees can be up or down a couple thousand depending on movements between facilities within Iraq for various reasons such as large releases.

At 11:00 p.m. we get about 100 new detainees. Detainees come in every day. We receive the detainees from in-processing (where I worked the first two months). Over a period of one to three days we give the detainees all the basic items they are authorized to

have by the U.S. military. The detainees already have one yellow jumpsuit, a set of flip flops, and basic items such as t-shirts, underwear, and socks. We give them some more basics plus a toothbrush, a towel, a Muslim prayer rug, and a Koran to read. That takes an hour and we are done around midnight.

Next we randomly search two of the fourteen tents in my work area (this is done on every shift). There are never any strip searches in the tent compound. We wake up everyone in the tents and line them up on the road that is between the two rows of tents and search each detainee. We search one tent at a time. After we pat down search each detainee, we put the group of 28 detainees in the detainee soccer field. The searches take another hour. We find a pen and some homemade yogurt. The detainees make yogurt by putting milk inside the water bottles we give them and letting the bottle full of milk sit in the sun until it curds. The detainees actually eat the yogurt. Some of them get sick from their homemade yogurt, so we have to throw the yogurt away every time we search the tents.

The pen we find comes from us for the purpose of writing Red Cross messages or detainee complaints. The MP who gives the detainee the pen is supposed to get the pen back. If we do not get the pens from the detainees they can use it to write rock notes to set up a riot. If a riot is to take place the detainees will prepare by making dirt rocks. They put water, dirt, and small rocks together to make a big nasty dirtball to throw at military police. We finish up the searches and put the detainees back to bed.

The last hour of my shift is quiet. For the next hour I again walk around the tents some more making sure the detainees do not escape. Sometimes I stop by a guard shack to talk to other soldiers. Around 2:00 a.m. the next twelve hour shift arrives to relieve us.

We brief them on whatever happened, then, hop into a military truck for the five minute drive back to our living area.

My living and sleeping area is an old cell that housed prisoners before the U.S military took over. I have one roommate in the cell which has been converted into a living area. My roommate is on the shift opposite of mine so I do not see him unless it one of his days off. My laptop computer arrives in the mail. Having a computer gives me a better connection to the outside world. I also get to see images on the computer screen that are different than what I see at Abu Ghraib.

CHAPTER 9 ~ MARCH



Figure 13 ~ Former Prison Cell Buildings now Living Quarters

Figure 13 shows one of the areas where the Iraqi government once housed prisoners. During the U.S. occupation of Abu Ghraib from 2003-2006, this area was converted to one of the living areas for coalition military personnel. There are various ways for me to distract myself besides the before mentioned basketball court and watch boxing matches. I like to be on the Internet to help connect me with the world outside of Abu Ghraib. I use the internet to have conversations with loved ones with a computer camera, or to write emails. Strolling around the detention facility without a purpose is not advised because of the possibility of getting injured from shrapnel from insurgent mortars.

I have been working in the compound area for only a couple of weeks when I wake up to the base alarm going off into the loudspeaker. It is very early. I've had just one hour of sleep and now I have to wake up and put on all my gear. Apparently seven

detainees have escaped from the in-processing area. The MP's on duty were not paying close enough attention to what the detainees were doing and they escaped over a part of the fence that did not have barbed wire. The detainees escape from the same place I worked at when I first came to Abu. The seven escapees were scheduled to be released from Abu that day.

Everyone meets in the unit's company area. I am assigned a group of soldiers and we go out into the morning darkness to find the detainees. There is a camera called a J-Lens with night vision capability. The camera which is on top of a 200 meter tower can see a person's body heat. A soldier is looking at a laptop computer screen that is hooked up to that camera to see if there are any movements under trucks, on top of rooftops, or anywhere else that detainees might be trying to hide. The camera spots two detainees and the military police are told where to go on the military radio.

Then three more detainees are found by the roving soldiers. After that we are still trying to find the last two. My group walks around the area I live in. Then we are told to stay put near a large garbage pile. The garbage area is a few acres and has all sorts of debris. We search the area and then make a perimeter around the trash. Before 10:00 a.m. the last two detainees are found under some military trucks. The search is done after seven hours and I go to work two hours later very tired.

The U.S. military leadership at Abu Ghraib is constantly worried about detainee escapes. If a detainee escapes then the MP that allowed that escape is in trouble, as well as the leadership in charge of that compound where the escape occurred. Due to the recent escape attempts, Military Intelligence (MI) is telling the MPs to be on the lookout for anything suspicious. That includes intercepting illegal messages between detainees.

There are many pigeons flying everywhere at Abu Ghraib. Many detainees take rice from their meals to feed the pigeons. The detainees even catch some of the pigeons and make little yellow jump suits for the pigeons to wear. Some MPs see the pigeons flying around and report what they see on the military radio to the Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) supervisor. The SOG announces that MI wants us to catch these pigeons wearing little yellow detainee looking jump suits. MI thinks that the pigeons may be carrying some kind of message for an escape attempt. As a result, I am in the guard tower watching the MPs trying to catch these pigeons. The pigeons would fly a short distance and then land somewhere. Eventually the pigeons successfully escape from the MPs and Abu Ghraib.

CHAPTER 10 ~ APRIL



Figure 14 ~ Detainee Made Fly Swatter

The detainees do various things to keep themselves busy. One can draw from pictures almost perfectly. Some of the soldiers give him some paper and art pencils or pens so he can draw personal pictures of their families. Other detainees make little objects using the clay dirt and water. The detainees take the clay dirt and then dry their creations in the hot sun. They make objects such as miniature army jeeps made of hardened clay dirt. As seen in figure 14, detainees will take off the string from their prayer rugs to make fly swatters, or to make string necklaces. The detainees also make colorful handbags out of plastic military ready-to-eat bags and their prayer rugs. The detainees have a large amount of time on their hands, and if they are creative, they can make artwork from anything.

I have been going to work at the compound for two months now. The first month I was a perimeter security as a rover. Now I am rotating to a zone representative every other day. An arriving zone representative receives a briefing before the prior shift can be relieved. The zone representative looks at a sheet that tells him if any of the detainees have appointments which can include a doctor's appointment at a certain time that day. I do an initial checklist looking at all my non-lethal weapons. I check to make sure I have my flex cuffs, flash grenades, paintball grenades, wood baton, and my pepper spray. Next, I call out the detainees for a headcount. I look at every detainee's serial number to ensure that the detainee is in their proper location.

I have a white board which shows the detainees out at appointments and those present. There is also a logbook that is used to record where the detainees are located. The first thing I do is a headcount to make sure all are present then I check every detainee's serial number (ISN) on their wrists.

All significant events that occur in the zone are noted in the log book. Such an event might include detainee infighting. If a fight breaks out I call on the radio for some more MPs to assist me. I go into the detainee area and get the ones that are fighting. The detainees are then handcuffed and taken to another part of Abu and segregated from one another. The fighting detainees are placed in individual cells for up to two weeks as punishment.

For minor infractions such as detainee hand signaling to each other, the punishment given is up to four hours in the outside compound segregation box. Iraqi society is cooperative and not individualistic like in the United States, so being segregated for even four hours is usually an effective punishment. The number of infractions committed, is

tracked on the detainee computer system. The more infractions committed in a certain period of time, then the more time is served in segregation.

A zone representative has the keys to the gates in front of each detainee tent. The zone rep makes sure the detainees have their big red water tanks filled when they are empty. Each one receives a mat to sleep on the concrete floor. They get a bucket to wash their clothes in and an open pit for water disposal. Every tent has a port-a-john as a rest room. All the tents have heat and air conditioning. There is a concrete bunker for when the insurgents shell Abu with mortars.

The zone representative is responsible for making sure the detainees get showers every other day. The detainees receive food, soap, and cigarettes throughout the day from the zone representative. The zone representative has to light the cigarettes for the detainees. This is because the detainees might use any matches they are given to light their tents on fire during a riot. This does not completely eliminate the possibility of fire but it is a strong deterrent. The downside is that all day long I hear, "Sergeant light my cigarette."

As the zone representative I also hand out detainee complaint request forms and Red Cross letters to be sent to the detainee's family members. Those forms are sent to the Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) shack then forwarded up to higher headquarters. All sorts of requests are made such as being put in the same tent with a brother, or complaining about not receiving proper medical treatment from a medic. The medics come every day in the morning before my shift. Usually the detainees complain about not receiving aspirin or being told to take their pills in front of the medic. The medics make sure that

all medications are taken in front of them to prevent a detainee from hoarding medicine to commit suicide.

Most of the detainees return from their medical or other appointments before dinner. Dinner arrives around 5:00 p.m. It is put onto individual plates and handed out to the detainees around 5:30 p.m. Another headcount is performed at 7:00 p.m. The detainees received televisions and DVD players this month. I am now required to show Hollywood made movies every night. Supposedly the movies are not shown to the detainees to make their lives at the detention center better. The movies are supposed to cause the detainees to not hate American culture. Unfortunately the types of movies that are shown to these conservative Muslims are reinforcing some of the detainee's beliefs about Americans. The movie we show have scenes full of sex and violence. This makes the Muslims believe that the U.S. is full of bloodthirsty and sex crazed people. It would seem that U.S. Military Intelligence needs some new strategies to win over the hearts and minds of the conservative Muslims.

I go get some movies from the main sergeant of the Guard (SOG) shack then play the movies when the sun goes down. The TV and DVD players are in front of the tents on my side of the fence. The movies keep freezing up. Since the detainees cannot reach the DVD player I keep getting called over to unfreeze the movies for the detainees. I do another headcount at 10:00 p.m. and it is now curfew so I tell the detainees to go to bed. The last four hours are quiet and I just walk around my four tents to make sure no detainees escape. The next shift that I relieved the day before at 2:00 p.m. arrives at 2:00 a.m. and relieves me. I drop off my non-lethal shotgun and pick up my M-16 rifle. My shift is over and I go back to the barracks.

It is getting hard to sleep in my barracks because the Halliburton military contracting company Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) is redoing the electrical wires in my barracks. Basically the wires KBR put in beforehand are considered unsafe. When KBR does anything they make money. They are reimbursed for all their costs and then are given a guaranteed profit. Abu is supposed to be torn down in a few months and those hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on rewiring will be all torn up.

There is an American supervisor in charge of a bunch of electricians from India. I talk to him and the supervisor tells me that he makes about ten thousand dollars each month tax free. The supervisor's employees from India make less than one thousand each month. It is the same in the chow hall where our meals come from. The supervisors are from the United States and the workers are from India.

The military police have been constantly complaining about the mud in the detention camp roads. Finally the U.S. military gets some contractors to dump some gravel on the road. The only problem is that the rainy season ended last month. Moreover Abu is going to be closing soon. The millions of dollars being given to the contractor KBR Company dumping gravel on the ground is more wasted U.S. taxpayer money. By July 2006 all that gravel dumped at Abu will be buried under the dirt by U.S. Army bulldozers.

CHAPTER 11 ~ MAY

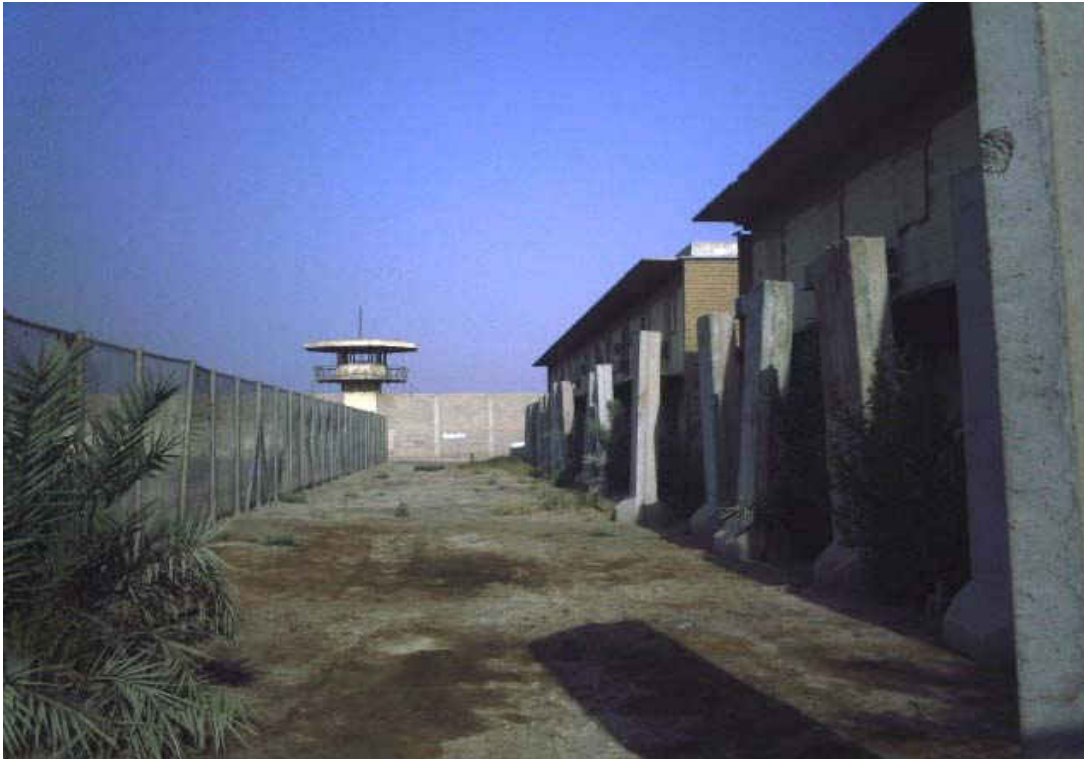


Figure 15 ~ Blast Walls

It is springtime but it is still somewhat humid from water evaporating off the ground. Iraq is a desert but feels like Florida in the summertime. At least Florida does not have Iraq's massive spring dust storms that can appear all of a sudden. The dust storms form when the ground dries up after the winter rainy season. Numerous fine dirt particles accumulate from the months of mud settling on the ground. All it takes is a strong wind to kick up the fine dirt particles.

I am given a new job as the assistant to the Sergeant of the Guard (SOG). The assistant SOG is nicknamed the yard dog. As yard dog I am in charge of the soldiers and detainees in the fourteen tent compound. The yard dog takes orders from SOG and makes sure the detainee camp is running smoothly. The SOG receives orders from higher level supervisors.

All the detainees lost radio privileges when a modified radio was found. The detainees were listening to our military radio communications. Now there are new larger radios on the outside of the fence along with the televisions and DVD player. The detainee's wives and girlfriends send the detainees messages through certain radio stations. I am constantly asked to put on those radio stations with the family messages. Military Intelligence (MI) has told us that we are to only have the Voice of America (VOA) station playing. The VOA station plays half English and half Arabic music and is funded by the United States. The detainees hate it and a lot of them do not even want to listen to the radio anymore. They only want to hear the radio station with their loved ones' messages. The stations with family messages are banned because MI believes that detainee families may instigate a detainee riot or escape attempts.

The detainees have one soccer field. Only one of the fourteen tents can play on the soccer field at a time. They mostly play soccer and volleyball inside the confined land area on the outside of their tent. They have about five meters of space between their tent and the fence that surrounds their tent. There is also a triple strand of barbed wire inside their tent area. In a short time, the balls get a bunch of holes in them and within a week are torn up and flat. The balls are always going over the tent fences. All day long the MPs are constantly throwing the balls back over the fence to the detainees.

A constant problem is that mentally unstable detainees are mixed with the mentally stable detainees. There is only one tent for those with medical issues (physical medical problems). There is no tent only for detainees with mental problems, so they are mixed with the other detainees. When a problem arises the mentally unstable detainee is placed in a segregated cell and then moved back to the general population after time is served.

We get a large number of mentally unstable detainees because the insurgents use them for suicide bombers. Mentally unstable persons are easier to convince to be suicide bombers for the various Iraqi insurgent groups.

One day I am walking around the compound and a detainee calls me over in English. I walk over and he says, "I am crazy Steve and you are going to remember me." I think he is just boasting but the next day I when I start my shift, one of the soldiers tell me that crazy Steve put some small pebbles in his ears. The medical personnel had to remove the rocks. After that crazy Steve is put into a segregation cell for two weeks. After two weeks, crazy Steve is back in the tent with the other detainees. Eventually crazy Steve is transferred to the other detention facility in southern Iraq called Camp Buca. Sometimes that is how problem detainees are dealt with. They are simply transferred back and forth between the two main U.S. run detention facilities in Iraq.

The Governor of Florida, Jeb Bush, visits this month. Apache attack helicopters escort the Blackhawk helicopter carrying the Governor. The Governor is visiting our Florida National Guard MP Company. He arrives before my work shift. All the soldiers about to go on shift are in formation to hear him speak. Our unit is in charge of three camps of detainees with 300-400 detainees in each camp. I cannot hear what the Governor is saying because the diesel generators are running. Everyone receives a military coin from the governor. The words: Governor Jeb Bush Commander and Chief of the Florida National Guard are etched on the coin.

After the Governor gives his speech soldiers take pictures with him. It is a very hot and humid day. It rained the day before which is unusual for May in Iraq. The temperature is now over 40 Celsius. Also the humidity is unusually high for the desert

climate. The heat is equal to the hottest summer day in Florida. The Governor is sweating profusely from the midday heat.

Jeb Bush is much taller than he seems on television. Just like us, the Governor is wearing a helmet and a flack vest. Some of the other soldiers are talking to him. I go up to the guard tower where I watch the Governor walk around the detention facility. The detainees take little notice of the Governor of Florida and they probably don't realize that he is the brother of the President of the United States. Later in the month the Vice-President of Iraq comes to visit the detainees. They are much more excited by the Iraqi politician and feel he has more significance because of his power to gain their release.

After a little over an hour, the visit is over. Jeb Bush jumps into a military truck and heads back to the helipad and jumps into the Blackhawk helicopter. Off into the sky he goes. Bush's tour of Abu Ghraib is over; I have six months left. The military leadership asks for everyone's cameras to make sure none of the soldiers accidently has pictures of detainees. When everyone gets their cameras back all the pictures on the cameras' memories are deleted.

Later in the month a mortar falls right next to my room. It is my day off but luckily I am eating lunch at the chow hall and not in my room. While I am in the chow hall the alarm goes off and I put on all my gear. When the all-clear sounds I walk back to my living area. To my surprise my roommate is awake (he works on the opposite shift). He was awakened by a mortar falling outside of our room. The mortar sent shrapnel into my room and the room next to mine. The prison is made of brick walls with small windows without glass. The glass was long ago broken by Iraqi looters after the Iraqi government fell in 2003. Now plywood replaces what was once glass.

The shrapnel that hit the brick wall did not go through. There was just a shotgun looking hole left on the outside wall. One of the soldiers was jogging outside and she got a piece of shrapnel on her shoe. She is lucky that it was not worse. I jog because it is the only time outside I do not have to wear all my combat gear outside. After the mortar attack I stopped jogging.

The next week mortars are falling again. During this mortar attack I am at the detainee camp. I go around yelling at the detainees to get into the concrete mortar shelters. The soldiers instruct the detainees that when the mortars are falling they need to get into the concrete shelter on the side of their tents. The International Committee of the Red Cross noted that there were problems of detainees being subjected to insurgent guerrilla warfare attacks (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-404).

CHAPTER 12 ~ JUNE



Figure 16 ~ Medical Trucks

The Iraqi government arrests a group of Sudanese people because they were working in Iraq without an Iraqi work visa. Then U.S. military Special Forces raid the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior because there are allegations that the Sudanese are being abused. My section of Abu receives around twenty Sudanese. They are given green jump suits. Most detainees have yellow jump suits unless they are minors then they get orange jump suits. While convicted detainees wear red jump suits. We have the Sudanese for a few days and then they were gone.

In preparation for the end of U.S military detainee operations at Abu Ghraib contractors have been removing equipment from Abu Ghraib for a couple of months. Now the contractors are tearing down sections of the detainee facility. The detention facility commander decides to burn large trash piles every day. The smoke color from the trash pile varies from dark black, to grey, or brown. The smoke blows in all sorts of

directions and sometimes it blows into my detainee area. The smoke is nauseating to breathe.

Last month they brought back the air conditioners to the guard towers and shacks. The air conditioners also have heaters. The heaters were removed when some soldiers fell asleep and two detainees escaped on New Year's morning. The supervisors are now allowing us to close the windows and use the air conditioners. A nice break from the hot desert air blowing through the windows.

Around half of the detainees still at Abu Ghraib will be released by the CRRB review board. There is not enough room for them. My detainee work area was once the camp for both in and out processing. Very few new detainees arrive at Abu. Now my compound is used for both the outgoing detainees and to hold detainees. We have some that are unlikely be released. My work area is becoming the place for the worst detainees that Abu has to offer.

When a detainee is convicted in an Iraqi court they are given red jump suits to wear. They are out processed out of the U.S. military run detention system and sent into the Iraqi run prison system. This month there have been many convictions and releases. The convictions are for carrying out insurgent terrorist attacks against the Iraqi government and Coalition Forces. They wear red jump suits to let the MPs know that they are convicted. There are some convicted detainees that get angry about being convicted and they refuse to follow the instructions of the military police. Those detainees are taken away to segregation cells. Another way the convicted detainees show their displeasure is by going on a hunger strike for a few days.

As the prison detainee population decreases in size, the leadership decides to put some of the juveniles into the general population area. The leadership has determined that some of the juveniles are over eighteen years old. The age of many detainees is unknown and so medical personnel sometimes have to determine if a detainee is a juvenile. I am told to move the tents with juveniles in them to the general population area. I protest to the SOG that it must be a mistake. The SOG replies on the radio that it is an order that must be carried out.

So I line up the juveniles that have now been determined to be adults over to the detainees in the general population area. The older detainees in general population are yelling out to the younger detainees in Arabic. One of the juveniles start to urinate in his jump suit as the group of twenty teenagers progress down the dirt road in front of a very large group of detainees that are lined up on the chain link fence of the general population area. The next day when I start my shift, the same juveniles from the day before are back. They are even in the same tents that I had previously removed them from. Apparently some of the teenage detainees were raped by the detainees in general population during the night. I feel sick to my stomach that I have been a part of that spectacle. I feel really bad for those teenagers and upset that the leadership made that decision.

As previously written regarding the detainees: the Sunni Muslim do not like the Shiite Muslim and conversely the Shiite Muslim do not like the Sunni Muslim. Whenever I talk to a detainee and they somehow bring up religion. They all say the same bad things about each other. When I talk to a Shiite Muslim he might call a Sunni

uneducated or a Sunni might call the Shiite uneducated. The clash of religion is similar to the fighting between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

As the Abu detainee population is decreasing in size, the leadership decides to end the segregation of the Sunni and Shiite Muslims. They figure that it is just for a couple of weeks and that everything will be fine. The different groups are mixed together. A week passes since the blending of the Shiite and Sunni Muslims. I am on guard duty in the tower in the evening. It is calm and peaceful then all of a sudden I hear a boom below. One of the soldiers throws a non-lethal paintball grenade to break up a fight. The detainees in one of the tents are stabbing another detainee with a tent pole because they are different types of Muslims. The detainee had to be stitched up and his broken leg put into a cast. After that, the Sunni and Shiite Muslims are separated once again.

Towards the end of the month we rotate to a compound next to my old detainee compound. This camp has mainly adult Shiite Muslims and juveniles who are both Sunni and Shiite Muslim. The detainees in these camps are friendlier and are more talkative. I try to get the teenagers to go to school but they think that the U.S. military is trying to brainwash them. Also, there is peer pressure to not go to school. Many of these teenagers live hard lives before they came to Abu. Some of the teenagers were homeless and for those Abu gives them more safety and stability than the dangerous streets of Iraq.

The detainees still at Abu have been told by various Iraqi officials that they are going to be released. When one asks, "Are we being released?" I reply, "I have no idea." Some will be released and some are going to be transferred to Camp Cropper Detention Center at Baghdad International Airport (BIOP). By the end of the month most of the detainees have been removed from Abu by transfer or release. There are now fewer than

1,500 in general population area. There are another 1,000 in the individually fenced tent area where I am working. Many of the MPs units have left with the detainees.

A large riot breaks out in the general population compounds. I can see the riot occurring next to my compound. Most of the MPs from my compound go running over to where the riot is occurring. Off duty MPs are called in. There are so many non-lethal paintball grenades exploding that it reminds me of a fireworks show. Then a tent catches on fire. Soon another tent is going up in flames. The Abu Ghraib Fire Department (AGFD) tries to put out the fire but is stopped because detainees are throwing rocks at them. A total of four tents go up in flames.

After the riot, my detention area receives 120 detainees from the four tents that burned down. Later that night I find out that one of the military police accidentally set the tents on fire. The soldier threw a flash bang grenade towards the detainees. It landed on a tent instead of the ground. Then the grenade flash makes sparks that set the tents on fire. A few of the MPs and detainees needed medical attention for minor injuries. I was surprised that nobody was hurt too badly in the riot.

CHAPTER 13 ~ JULY



Figure 17 ~ Tools of Demolition

Figure 17 shows the U.S. Army bulldozers that will be used to destroy all evidence of the months of my life that I spent inside the detainee compounds of Abu Ghraib. Before the demolition begins there are tents, fences, towers, and guard shacks. After the bulldozers finish there are only rocks and sand leftover. I am happy that Abu is being demolished because I am now one step closer to being home in Florida. The end of U.S. military operations at Abu Ghraib is the end of a terrible chapter in American history. The way I feel about my role at Abu Ghraib is that it was a pointless excise of U.S. military power. I personally think it would have been better for me to be in Afghanistan.

The heat is unbearable this time of the year, 120 degrees Fahrenheit, or 50 Celsius. The combination of wearing heavy military combat gear and the extreme summer heat is making my job more difficult. Thank goodness more detainees are being released because there is not enough space at Camp Cropper at Baghdad International Airport, or at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq. Among those being released by the Combined Review and Release Board (CRRB) now are detainees in which the arresting military units appealed to stop from being released.

The detainees have been flying out all month in U.S. Army Chinook helicopters. Other MPs have been flying out as well. Our unit will be the last MP unit at Abu. We start to fly out our detainees on Friday July 14, 2006. Each detainee's wrists are zip tied in the front with plastic flex cuffs. They are blindfolded, placed on a bus for a ride that lasts a couple of minutes to the helipad. The detainees are then unloaded on a road beside the helipad and then await for the U.S. military helicopters. Chinook helicopters arrive with the rear doors open. We lead the blindfolded to the rear entrance of the helicopters and load them into the Chinooks as the engines are still running. The detainees seem to be frightened of the whole process. By Sunday July 16, 2006 we are done removing the detainees. Forward Operating Base Abu Ghraib is now empty and quiet without the thousands of people walking around.



Figure 18 ~ Demolition of Compound



Figure 19 - Detainee Tents Burned to Ground

When all the detainees leave I am given a relatively easy job monitoring the camera that watches out for attacks from insurgents. I have more free time. My fellow soldiers are either on convoy duty, escorting Iraqi contractors, or tearing down the makeshift military barracks rooms in the prison cells. Abu Ghraib is closing and almost all the military personnel are gone. I am now able to walk around Abu and take pictures of the detention compounds being demolished.

Figure 18 is of the detainee yard where I worked. The twisted box in the middle of the picture is what we used to put detainees in when they were misbehaving. The segregation box is for violations with punishments of less than four hours. Figure 19 is a view from a guard tower looking into the general population compound area. This is where detainees were placed unless they were not following detention center rules and were considered dangerous. The tents are all burned to the ground to make demolition easier. This particular compound area would have held 500 detainees. There were four general compounds of 500 detainees each in this section of Abu. A general population compound can hold more than a single fenced in tent.

Typical ways for most detainees to pass their time are to sit and read the Koran, or to talk. For exercise detainees play soccer, volleyball, or walk around their tents. Some would do artistic things as mentioned beforehand. The detainees would watch everything we MPs did. Some would spend all day trying to figure out an escape plan, or preparing for a riot. In the world outside of prison a person is usually busy with daily activities such as work, school, or other tasks. In prison there is not much that needs to be done, so there is a lot of time to do unimportant tasks. For most detainees the only time of importance is the time that they will be released.



Figure 20 ~ What a Detainee Would See



Figure 21 ~ The Segregation Cell Compound



Figure 22 ~ Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) Office



Figure 23 ~ Gate Entrance to a Detainee Compound

Figure 20 shows what a detainee would see from an individual fenced in tent. These individually fenced tents are considered too dangerous for the general population compound. Detainees that have other issues or who are in danger of being mistreated, such as juveniles, non-Iraqi foreign fighters, those with medical problems and the Shiite Muslims are also placed in these individually fenced in tents. Sunni Muslims made up the general population compound tent areas. Separating detainees into various groups helped to keep the fighting to a lower frequency

Figure 21 shows the segregation area where a detainee is sent to for up to two weeks when disobeying detention compound rules. This outside area was easier for the leadership to monitor on camera. Detainee torture is therefore more difficult to hide in these outside segregation cells. Iraqi detainees usually enjoy the company of other detainees. Being segregated alone is quite upsetting. Yet, rule breakers had to be dealt with to keep attitudes in check. An emboldened attitude makes the detainee a danger to the military police and other detainees.

Figure 22 shows a typical Sergeant of the Guard (SOG) compound building where operations were coordinated. Figure 23 shows the entrance and the dirt road that goes down the middle of each detainee compound. There is a fence around each compound, and each individual tent. When the MPs first come to the compound, they enter the SOG compound building first for a briefing from the SOG. The SOG building is where the detainee movements are tracked. The SOG shack is where orders are received from higher ranking military personnel to be relayed to the MPs that work with the detainees.



Figure 24 ~ Detainee Single Tent Living Area



Figure 25 ~ Detainee Showers

Figure 24 shows what a typical detainee tent area looked like. The tent is taken down and barely standing up off to the right of the concrete slab. The concrete slab was the floor. On average 28 detainees would sleep on thin, cotton filled mats. When I was at Abu in 2006, some detainees had been in these tent areas since 2003, still waiting for a trial in the Iraqi court system.

While I was at Abu I watched a Turkish movie with Hollywood star Billy Zane acting called Kutlar Vadisi Irak. The movie is about some Turkish Special Forces taken hostage by U.S. Special Forces and then released. Moreover, the movie shows Turkish soldiers fighting for innocent Iraqi citizens that have become detainees at Abu Ghraib and are being killed by U.S. military personnel. The anti-American movie was made in Turkey, a U.S ally and a member along with the U.S. military of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The movie is a spin off from a top rated Turkish television show. This movie was popular in the Muslim world and clearly shows that the U.S. needs to do a better job in winning the hearts and minds of the Muslim world.

The detainees shower at Abu Ghraib two to three times a week. The detainees received fifteen minutes to shower in showers such as the ones shown in figure 25. In the fictional Turkish movie Kutlar Vadisi-Irak shows U.S. soldiers using high pressure hoses to wash the Iraqi detainees. The Muslim world clearly does not trust us and is willing to believe outrageous fictionalizations about Abu Ghraib. The pictures of the U.S. MPs torturing detainees instills a deep mistrust against the U.S. that makes fictional Anti-American movies such as Kutlar Vadisi-Irak more believable to some people.



Figure 26 ~ M1 Abrams Tank inside Inner Wall



Figure 27 ~ U.S. Army Humvees Waiting to go on a Military Convoy

Security is a major concern for U.S. military forces. Figure 26 is of a U.S. Army M1 Abrams main battle tank coming off their duty shift on the highway overpass outside of the detention facility. The tank comes in through the rear gate and is now on the inside of the Abu Ghraib perimeter wall. The guard tower behind the tank is manned by U.S. military personnel with 50 caliber machine guns. That is what being in Iraq was all about for the CF military personnel in 2006. Watching and waiting for the insurgent guerrilla forces to attack and then responding to that attack. The insurgents try to set up a roadside bomb to blow up this Abrams tank. Luckily, they do not have time to set it off. The insurgent group is caught planting the bomb right outside the rear gate and arrested.

These two military trucks seen at Abu Ghraib in figure 27 are typical of the type of vehicles that all U.S military forces drove around Iraq in 2006. The armored trucks have air conditioning but in the Iraqi summer they are still hotter inside than the outside air. For some members of the U.S. military, convoy operations are a major part of their daily lives. In 2006 members of the U.S. military in Iraq are stationed in large Forward Operating Bases (FOBs). These FOBs make essential convoys to keep military personnel supplied. Insurgent attacks on U.S. military convoys are a constant danger whenever a U.S. military convoy leaves their FOBs.

On August 14, 2006, the Iraqi forces arrive in American made Humvees to take over responsibility of FOB Abu Ghraib. They spend a few hours at our facility and then leave. On August 20, 2006 our living area is shelled with three mortars. A few hours later, everyone in my unit has to move to a new location within Outpost Abu. By now most of the structures meant to protect us from mortars have been taken out of Abu Ghraib to other forward operating bases.



Figure 28 ~ One of my Living Areas



Figure 29 ~ Original Abu Ghraib Guard Tower

Forward Operating Base Abu has now become a military outpost. This means that there are no FOB luxuries for the military personnel. I do not care about the lack of luxuries because I feel such relief at being done with guard duty. As U.S. military personnel are leaving Abu Ghraib many of the diesel generators are being removed as well.

The generator that was left in our living area kept on shutting down. Whenever it shut down the air conditioners in our living area would stop working. On day I was on my computer and the generator made a popping sound and my laptop computer began smoking and stopped working. My living area gets shelled by mortars so everyone moves to different buildings. I do not have to worry about that broken generator anymore. The new generator is useless to my newly burned up and broken computer. A picture of my living area before I was shelled can be seen on figure 28.

I am reassigned to one of the guard towers as seen in figure 29. These guard towers surround the perimeter of Abu Ghraib. Now I am just waiting to leave Abu Ghraib, for my next detainee duty station near Baghdad International Airport. I feel like a detainee just waiting for my release date from Abu Ghraib.

CHAPTER 14 ~ AUGUST EXIT ABU GHRAIB



Figure 30 ~ Rooftop of Hard Site



Figure 31 ~ Guard Tower View of Buildings of the Hard Site



Figure 32 ~ Beds from Hard Site Pilled Up



Figure 33 ~ Hallway Inside Hard Site Building

In August of 2006 I have the opportunity to take some photographs of the detention area where U.S. military personnel tortured Iraqi detainees in 2003. After the news organizations reported the tortures, the U.S. military abandoned the building where the abuses occurred. As previously mentioned, the area was named the hard site. The Iraqi government then used the infamous building complex to house convicted Iraqi detainees. Walking freely in a detention facility with no detainees present is a unique experience.

The outside of the hard site building can be seen in figure 31. There does not seem to be any areas there for the detainees to work out or play team sports. The hard site is just a complex of brick buildings with prison cells in them. There are some amenities for the detainees such as a cafeteria, mosque, and medical clinic. The individual prison cells do not have showers or rest rooms. Approximately half the building area is devoted to general population detainees that do have rest rooms inside those cells.

After the hard site was abandoned all the detainee beds were removed and placed outside the detention building complex. Figure 32 shows the thousands of steel bed frames just laying on the perimeter wall and fence. By the time I took this picture the frames had been outside for eight months. Most are rusting. Figure 33 shows the main hallway at the hard site where detainees were tortured in 2003. Detainees were brought in and out of their cells via this hallway. It is apparent when I go through the building in August that it has been abandoned for awhile because of all the dust on the ground. There are a few other footprints along with mine on the dusty floor.



Figure 34 ~ Detainee Wall Art, Crying Woman



Figure 35 ~ Detainee Wall Art, Iraq Flag



Figure 36 ~ Detainee Wall Art, Man facing Woman

In the hard site there are various artworks on the walls of the detainee cells. Figures 34, and 36, are done with charcoal on a concrete wall with a white background. For the detainees and their families the reality of their separation and detention must have been difficult. After I leave Abu Ghraib, I am reassigned to the entrance point for family visitation at the Camp Cropper detention facility at Baghdad International Airport (BIOP). In general the families of the detainees appear sad and stressed that they cannot be with their loved ones.

Patriotism is not exclusive to the United States. Iraqi people also are proud of their nation. Figure 35 is a photograph of an Iraqi flag drawn on a detainee cell wall. The Iraq wall flag is made with various elements such as a black charcoal, an unknown powdery substance to make the green color, and cotton balls with red coloring dye.

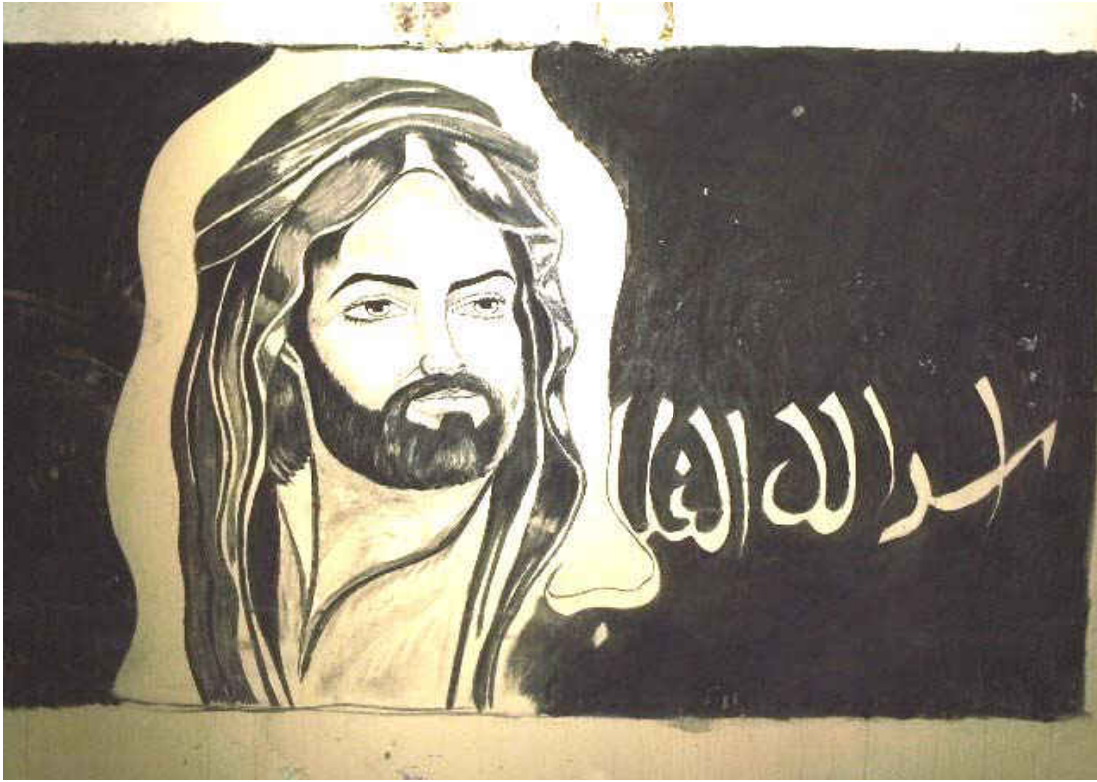


Figure 37 ~ Detainee Wall Art, Muslim Religious Art

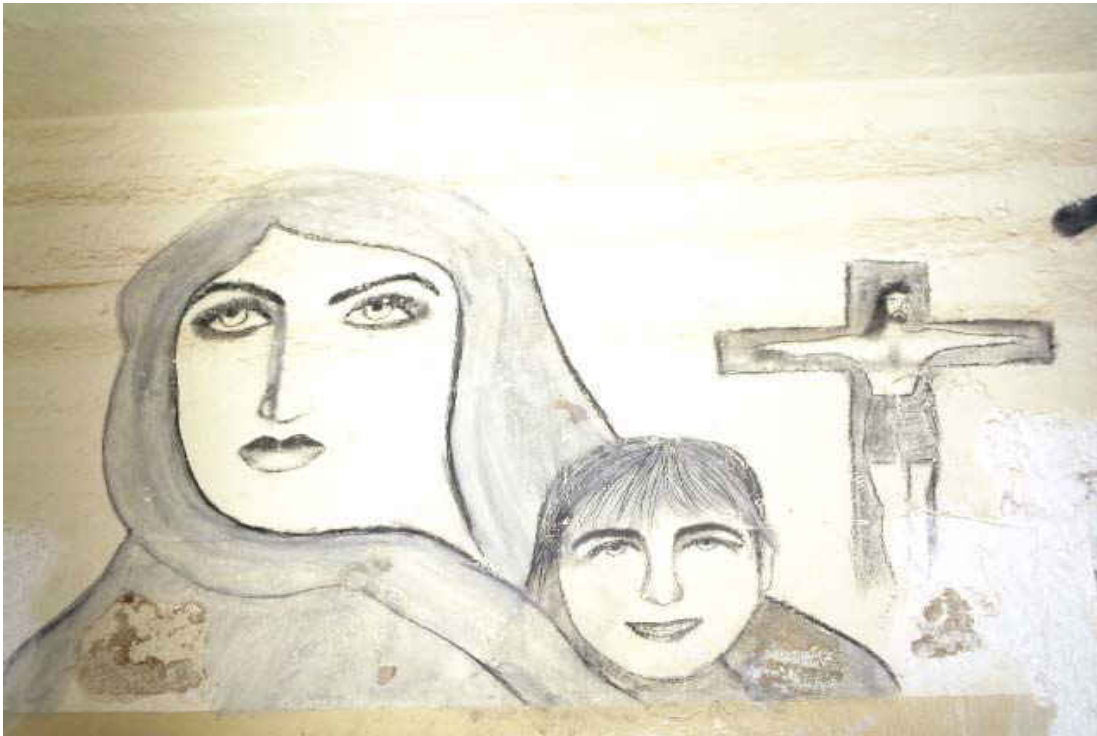


Figure 38 ~ Detainee Wall Art, Christian Religious Art



Figure 39 ~ A Cellblock Wing

Figure 37 is a charcoal drawing representing a historical Muslim figure. It is one of the descendants of Mohammed. The charcoal drawing is three by five meters. The Muslim religion is important in Iraqi society. At Abu Ghraib religious beliefs become even more important. Some of the drawings have been painted over making it impossible to figure out what was there before. Iraqi religious views are mainly Muslim. Still, there is a minority Christian religious population in Iraq. Figure 38 is a Christian depiction of Christ on the cross. It shows that some of the Christian detainees are not afraid of displaying their Christian religious beliefs.

Figure 39 shows a detainee wing at the hard site where some of the pictures of tortured detainees were taken in 2003. The lighting above the cells is natural lighting from the sun. There was no electricity in the building when I was taking these pictures.

The U.S. military left Abu Ghraib to the Iraqi government. In 2009 the Iraqi government reopened a renovated Abu Ghraib and renamed it Baghdad Central Prison (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29323805/>). It is very dusty when I'm taking these pictures because there have been no prisoners inside the hard site for almost a year.

The Iraqi Army returns to Abu Ghraib on August 28, 2008. The soldiers in my unit are happy because we are closer to leaving Outpost Abu. I spend the next few days observing the Iraqi Army performing their guard tower observation security duty. The Iraqi Army unit does not seem happy about being here. The 690th MP unit finally leaves Outpost Abu on August 31, 2006 and drives to Baghdad International Airport (BIOP).

My unit then moved to BIOP for the next two months. My new job is to search detainee families that are visiting their loved ones. I am searching family members for contraband and checking their identification cards. The family member sometimes starts to cry if they find out a detainee has been moved to Camp Buca in southern Iraq. Driving down to southern Iraq is impossible with the sectarian violence. The religious insurgent groups put up random roadblocks and execute people who are not in their religious group.

I finally fly out of Iraq on my birthday November 11, 2006. We land at Fort Stewart, Georgia, instead of Fort Dix, New Jersey, to out process from the active duty U.S. Army. In a week I return to my National Guard unit in Plant City, Florida, where there are hundreds of family members waiting for all the National Guard soldiers.

CHAPTER 15 ~ GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Continued mortar attacks cause military police to lose sleep during off duty rest time. Serving thirteen hour shifts six days a week and watching detainees despite constant attacks by the insurgents is psychologically challenging for the Military Police (MPs). Add to that the extreme heat of 50 Celsius and above in the summer, and constant dangers from shelling which made wearing a helmet and flack vest necessary. All these discomforts occur while conducting detention center operations with MPs that are understaffed, and a detention center over capacity with detainees. All the factors listed above made MP detainee duty at Abu Ghraib very challenging and dangerous for both the MPs and detainees.

Abu was finally closed by the U.S. military three years after being occupied in August 2006 and a permanent prison was built at Baghdad International Airport (BIOP). The post Saddam Hussein Iraqi government is now in charge of the Abu Ghraib detention center. Expansions are also made at Camp Bucca in southern Iraq near the Kuwaiti border (the other detention facility with detainee tents). It should have not taken three years to build a detention facility. A temporary tent facility could have been easily constructed at BIOP. The ICRC noted that the CF was in violation of Article 23.2 of the third Geneva Convention and Article 88 of the fourth Geneva Convention. “When placement in a detention facility is considered unsafe, persons deprived of their liberty should be transferred to other places of internment, offering adequate security and living conditions in accordance with the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions” (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-404).

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) should have been prepared to conduct detainee operations. By having internment facility sites available both inside and outside the U.S for enemy combatant detainees that followed Geneva Convention guidelines. When the detention facility was considered unsafe, the detainees needed to be transferred to another facility that was considered safe, in accordance with Article three and four of the Geneva Convention (International Committee of the Red Cross 383-484).

While the conditions inside Abu Ghraib were dangerous, unfortunately, conditions outside Abu Ghraib were worse. Iraqi people were being murdered in large numbers by insurgent groups. The movie Voices of Iraq shows the challenges of daily life for the average Iraqi citizen. There was no detailed and preplanned course of action by the U.S. government for the Iraqi people in the aftermath of war. They had to put up with: constant power outages, lack of water, sewage in the streets, sporadic trash collection, and insurgent groups causing chaos in the general civilian population.

During the occupation of Iraq by the U.S. military, the Iraqi people were dealing with high unemployment. As seen in the movie Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers, the U.S government funded reconstruction contractors often hired people from other nations, and not Iraqi citizens, to perform reconstruction work. Security contractors often wore military style looking uniforms. Most of the Iraqi people could not differentiate between a private security contractor wearing a military style uniform and the CF uniformed military personnel. These security contractors were only concerned with completing their mission, and sometimes they gave Iraqi citizens a bad impression of U.S. military forces. This confusion among Iraq civilians of who was a security contractor and who was a U.S. military member was discussed on an October 2, 2007 hearing titled Blackwater USA in

the U.S. Congress (<<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>>). The private contractors perform various support activities, and some direct military functions for the U.S. military. At Abu Ghraib military functions such as interrogations were sometimes assigned to private contractors. Private contractors allow military commanders to need less military personnel. Contractors have less accountability and regulations to follow than do U.S. military personnel (Verkuil 27).

Operation Iraqi Freedom caused the U.S. military to pull troops out of Afghanistan to fight in Iraq. Thus, the U.S. military became dependent on paying cash bounties in Afghanistan to local militias that arrested suspected terrorists. The movie Taxi to the Dark Side discussed how a cash bounty system made it more likely that innocent people would be captured in the hopes of getting cash from the U.S. military.

Even with all the problems in how the military conducted detainee operations, some of the leadership in the military prefers not differing from the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), even when a change might be necessary. The reason for the hesitation is that if an officer does not make changes to the SOP, then they are covered from responsibility if something goes wrong. If an officer does recommend changes and something goes wrong, then that officer's career can be negatively affected. A book titled Crisis in Command had the following explanation of the problem, "command responsibility is often avoided or transferred to subordinates when operations go poorly" (Gabriel 120).

Increased supervision of MPs seems to be the quickest and easiest way to stop torture from occurring at Abu Ghraib. If an MP knows a supervisor can come around the corner at any moment then abuse is unlikely. The problem detainees are moved to outside tents

and segregation boxes after the tortures in 2003 where it is easy to see and hear any abuse. Each tent has 28 detainees which make it unlikely that a few wayward MPs will go inside a tent and take on those odds. The outside, open compounds were better at minimizing the possibility for detainee torture, when compared to the hard to supervise brick buildings where the tortures occurred.

Increased supervision is not enough; there are still weaknesses in the U.S military SOP on detainee operations. It seems that some of the previous problems that allowed for the torture of detainees were still present Abu Ghraib in 2006. There were still weaknesses in military police corrections training that left the door open for the possibility of torture to occur again. In my two months of training to be a military police corrections officer at Fort Dix, New Jersey, there were no training sessions on the misuse of excessive force against a detainee, nor were there any classes given against the torturing of detainees.

There needs to be more training specifically in daily detainee operations for U.S. military personnel that are going to be assigned to detainee operations. Of my two months of detention operations training, only five days were dedicated to training in detainee operations in a detention center compound. None of those five days of training dealt with the operation of a detention center on a daily basis. The five days of training I received consisted of cell extraction, riot control, handcuffing, and the use of pepper spray. Before an MP goes to a real detention center, there is no training on taking care of a detainee's daily issues and basic needs. Only when MPs entered an actual detention facility where they have been assigned to, do they then receive a few days of orientation training by the military MP unit they are replacing.

More pictures of detainee torture at Abu Ghraib have been discovered and the American Civil Liberties Union is requesting their release in U.S. federal court. President Obama has decided to fight the release of the torture photos at the time of this writing. President Obama believes that showing the photos to the worldwide media and public could give Islamic groups more anti-American propaganda (<http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/05/14/iraq.u.s.detainees/index.html>).

Recently declassified memos show the documents the Justice Department used under President Bush authorizing torture against enemy combatants. Torture is prohibited under the U.S. criminal code passed by both the Senate, and House of Representatives. Currently President Obama does not wish to pursue investigations into the memos authorizing torture. Even current court cases of U.S. government officials with any involvement in torture during the Bush administration are discouraged. An example of this is a civil lawsuit case involving five men who allege that an airline company cooperated with the CIA by flying them to secret locations to be tortured. The five men won the right in a U.S. federal appeals court to have their lawsuit case heard in court. Citing national security issues both President Bush and President Obama did not want the civil lawsuit case to proceed

(<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/archives/archives.php>).

Lower level MPs were prosecuted by the U.S. Army and found guilty and given various sentences, including prison terms for torturing detainees at Abu Ghraib. Unlike lower ranking U.S. military personnel, both higher ranking military personnel (Gabriel 120) and Justice Department lawyers who authorized torture have so far avoided prosecution (<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/archives/archives.php>). I do not

believe that the U.S. government officials and lawyers, who write on a sheet of paper on how to torture a detainee, are any less guilty than an MP at Abu Ghraib who decides to torture a detainee without being told to. The U.S. government officials and lawyers could have quit their job in protest, just as the individual MPs who were torturing the detainees as a group could have told their superiors. It is an abuse of power to allow lower level MPs to be prosecuted for torture, while not prosecuting the more powerful U.S. government officials.

CONCLUSION

Operation Iraqi Freedom has lasted much longer than anticipated. During my first deployment to Iraq we were told in April 2003 that we will be home by July 2003. We ended up being home in March 2004. The Iraq conflict has taken longer than expected to be resolved. The conflict in Iraq now is estimated to have cost the U.S. economy over two trillion dollars. That is due to not just the cost of the war but other factors such as increased veterans healthcare, resupplying the military, loss of economic output because military reservist are deployed, and increased interest payments on the U.S. government debt as well as other costs (Stigliz el al. 57).

In this thesis, I explain what an MP goes through in dealing with detainees. This thesis takes an autobiographical narrative look at my MP service with the Florida Army National Guard at Abu Ghraib from December 2005 through August 2006. To help show what it is like for an MP there are 39 photographs taken by myself of the Forward Operating Base Abu Ghraib. There is a brief literature review on the 2003 torture of detainees by MPs at Abu Ghraib, and a review of the history of the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq by U.S. lead Coalition Forces.

In writing this thesis I tried not to have a conformity bias in my remembering of the events that occurred during my time at Abu Ghraib. Patrick Hogan, a cognitive psychologist, gives a definition of conformity bias as, “a universal human tendency spontaneously to class as confirmatory all data that fits one’s beliefs, while spontaneously classing disconfirmatory data as exceptions.” It is hard to write an autobiographical account of an event in one’s life without putting one’s own distortional spin on the events of the past (Hogan 74).

The MPs at Abu Ghraib were most likely not following any orders to torture their detainees. The MPs were most likely just bored and sadistic. The Stanford prison experiment in 1971 showed that normal college educated people can become sadistic guards. The experiment reveals that even normal students innocent of any crimes will let themselves be degraded because of fear. The student prisoners voluntarily gave up their personal control in response to the student guards demeaning orders. As noted in the book titled The Lucifer Effect, student prisoners allowed the student guards to “limit their happiness” because that was their self image of themselves (Zimbardo 243).

The Milligram study on obedience of authority does not exactly fit what happened at Abu Ghraib. Milligram was looking at obedience from direct orders given by an authority figure. The torture that occurred at Abu Ghraib in 2003 fit more into conformity pressures of dehumanization. Phillip Zimbardo noted in a book titled Obedience to Authority that the milligram experiment does show that people can be pressured to conform by higher authorities (Zimbardo 243). The torture that occurred at Abu Ghraib could possibly be seen as institutionalized because the U.S. military trains personnel to work as a group and to be aggressive, forceful, and kill other human beings.

In the Stanford Prison Experiment the student guards squash a prison rebellion with fire extinguishers. After the student prisoners rebelled they were stripped naked by the student guards. As the experiment continued, the student guard’s behavior became increasingly worse. The guards had to be reminded not to be so abusive to the student prisoners. The worst abuses by the student guards were committed by the night shift when the guards thought the supervisors were asleep. As noted in the book Obedience to Authority the torture by the MPs at Abu Ghraib occurred during a time of little

supervision on the night shift as was also the case at the Stanford University prison experiment in 1971 (Zimbardo 198-214).

This thesis explains that detention center operations are more complicated for U.S. military personnel in a war zone because of unexpected problems and stressors. I recommend that the U.S. Department of Defense conduct further research on detainee operations to improve standard operating procedures and improve MP detainee operations training. MPs need to know how to operate a detention center compound before they are sent to a real detention center. The training needs to be as realistic as possible. There should also be increased supervision of U.S. military personnel who interact with detainees. This thesis gives some idea of what occurs at a U.S. military run detention center. It is my belief that the U.S. military can prevent detainee torture through proper training, supervision and regulations.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDIT

I used my own camera to take all the pictures featured in this thesis. They were all taken in 2006 except for the photo of Baghdad University which was taken in late December 2003.

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