

USSOUTHCOM United States Southern Command Press Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Investigation Determines No Evidence of Detainee Abuse at GTMO

DORAL, FL. — Admiral James G. Stavridis, Commander, U.S. Southern Command, approved six of the seven recommendations resulting from an investigation of allegations raised by a U.S. Marine Corps paralegal that guards, assigned to Joint Task Force-Guantanamo may have mistreated detainees.

Army Col. Richard C. Bassett, the investigating officer, determined that insufficient evidence exists to substantiate the paralegal's allegations.

The investigation, initiated on October 13, 2006, was expanded 10 days later to include a related allegation, filed by a civilian employee, which recounted a conversation between a female guard and a male interrogator on a training range. Bassett determined during his investigation that the conversation was a fictitious account of abuse.

During the course of the investigation, investigators conducted 20 separate interviews with suspects and witnesses, including detainee medical providers, and searched three JTF-Guantanamo records systems used to track detainee-guard interaction and allegations of possible abuse. The evidence did not support any of the allegations of mistreatment or harassment.

Stavridis approved the following recommendations:

- No disciplinary action against the Sailors identified by the paralegal in her affidavit.
- A letter of counseling for the female guard who initiated the fictitious account of detainee abuse.
- Reorganization/rotation of guard force personnel working in close proximity to detainees.
- Continuous refinement of JTF-GTMO Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Continued training and supervision of all personnel involved in detainee operations.
- Review of authorized activities involving alcoholic beverages.

Stavridis disapproved forwarding the investigation to the Marine paralegal's chain of command for further action.

The final investigation has been submitted to the Department of Defense Inspector General who directed USSOUTHCOM to conduct the investigation.

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