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## **More abuse of prisoners discovered**

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WASHINGTON - Marines in Iraq conducted mock executions of juvenile prisoners last year, burned and tortured other detainees with electrical shocks, and warned a Navy medic they would kill him if he treated any injured Iraqis, according to military documents made public Tuesday.

The latest revelations of prisoner abuse, obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union in a lawsuit against the government, involved previously unknown incidents in which 11 Marines were punished for abusing detainees.

Military officials indicated that they investigated 13 other cases but deemed them unsubstantiated. Four investigations are pending.

Military superiors handed down sentences of up to a year in confinement after finding Marines guilty of offenses ranging from assault to "cruelty and mistreatment," the documents show.

The new documents are the latest in a series of reports, e-mails and other records that the ACLU has obtained to bolster its contention that the abuse of prisoners goes far beyond the handful of soldiers charged with abusing detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The naked photographs of Iraqi prisoners being tortured by American troops at the prison shocked the world last April.

While the scandal involved abuse by reservists, and members of the Army and National Guard, the latest cases elaborate for the first time on numerous allegations of abuse by Marines.

The mistreatment occurred as early as May 2003, months before the first allegations of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison were recorded. And the most recent case involving prisoner abuse by the Marines occurred in June, two months after the prison scandal broke.

Anthony Romero, executive director of the ACLU in New York, laid responsibility for the abuse at the Pentagon.

"This kind of widespread abuse could not have taken place without a leadership failure of the highest order," he said.

Lawrence Di Rita, the chief Pentagon spokesman, said he could not comment on the latest cases because he was unfamiliar with them.

The documents described Navy criminal investigators scrambling to keep pace in June with an "exploding" number of abuse cases.

"Heads up," an assistant special agent-in-charge of the Navy's investigative field office in the Middle East warned his superiors in a 6 a.m. e-mail June 14, pleading for more investigators.

"Case load is exploding, high-visibility cases are on the rise," he advised. "We have scrubbed all of our personnel and have no other trained personnel available to deploy."

Cases involving prisoner abuse continue to tarnish the U.S. military's involvement in Iraq. Since the Abu Ghraib scandal, revelations have surfaced of other detainees in Iraq, in Afghanistan and at the prison for terror suspects on the U.S. Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Authorities have charged a half-dozen prison guards with beating and sexually humiliating prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad last fall. At least two other prisoners at Abu Ghraib died in custody.

In all, some three dozen prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan are believed to have died in U.S. custody. The cases are in various stages of investigation or prosecution.

The Pentagon confirmed this week that four soldiers were accused of killing a prisoner in Afghanistan in 2002, but charges against three were dropped.

In the case that drew the stiffest punishment, a one-year prison sentence for the Marine, a detainee at Mahmudiya was shocked with an electric transformer.

Wires were held against his shoulders and "the detainee danced as he was shocked," the documents state.

The new records, which blacked out the names of soldiers, also show that a Marine was convicted of ordering four juvenile Iraqi looters to kneel down beside two shallow holes in Adiwanayah. Then, "a pistol was discharged to conduct a mock execution."

The Marine was sentenced to 30 days imprisonment at "hard labor."

Other Marines were punished for physically abusing prisoners.

In Karbala, a Marine held a 9mm pistol to the back of a detainee's head while another Marine snapped a picture. A glass of water then was poured on the prisoner's head, and he was photographed with an American flag draped over his body.

A detainee in Mahmudiyah suffered second-degree burns and blisters on the back of his hands when "a Marine guard squirted alcohol-based sanitizer" on him. A match was lighted, igniting the prisoner.

Navy investigators found other allegations unsubstantiated.

Navy investigators also interviewed a group of medics from Washington state who were dispatched to Iraq last year. Two of them spoke about being intimidated by Marines there.

One medic said he was cautioned not to talk to others about prisoner abuse. "There was a lot of peer pressure to keep one's mouth shut," the medic said.

Another medic said, "We were told not to exhaust our resources on the Iraqis. Several Marines told me that if I provided medical services to any Iraqi military or civilian personnel, that they (the Marines) would kill me."

However, the medic later said that "there was a wounded Iraqi POW who needed his dressings changed" and that some Marines "actually called my attention to him to make sure he received treatment."

He also recalled seeing Marines force detainees' heads into the dirt, "which was a cultural insult to them," and that he saw a Marine striking a prisoner with an empty, five-gallon plastic water jug.

The records discuss the deaths of several detainees, but it does not identify them or say how the cases were resolved.

One prisoner, who had attempted 20 escapes, reportedly died after breaking free of his restraints and jumping from a window, "landing on his head," the documents state.

The examining Marine officer "surmised that the detainee died from internal cranial bleeding from the fall that was slow to kill him."

Another prisoner was "ziplocked" -- a military term for being handcuffed -- and then died while in custody.

"Preliminary information is that the detainee died from an apparent heart attack," the reports state.

In other cases, there was spirited debate, in reports and e-mails, about the corpses of prisoners. One dead Iraqi could not be found, and an e-mail ordered, "try to find that body; we'll exhume if possible."

In another e-mail exchange, military officials discussed whether autopsies should be conducted in Iraq, at military bases in Germany or in the United States.

"Personally," responded one military officer, "I suspect that remains should probably NOT be brought to the U.S. for legal reasons." He did not elaborate.

Two Marines were disciplined for claiming to have done things they didn't do. One was convicted of lying to a Las Vegas newspaper that he "personally executed two Iraqis." He forfeited a month's pay.

The other Marine told a military surgeon that he broke his hand "punching an EPW (enemy prisoner of war) in the face" and told an officer that he broke it "punching an EPW in the back of the head." Back in the U.S., "he recanted, stating he punched the ground." He lost two months' pay.