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## **Sources: Military lawyers objected to interrogation methods at Guantanamo**

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WASHINGTON -- Military lawyers at the Guantanamo Bay terrorist prison tried to stop inhumane interrogations, but were ignored by senior Pentagon officials, The New York Daily News has learned.

Judge advocates - uniformed legal advisers known as JAGs who were assigned to a secret war crimes task force - repeatedly objected to aggressive interrogations by a separate intelligence unit at Camp Delta, where Taliban and al-Qaida suspects have been jailed since January 2002.

But Pentagon officials "didn't think this was a big deal, so they just ignored the JAGs," a senior military source said.

The military lawyers' actions had never been disclosed and are the first known cases of lower-level officers resisting interrogations at the Cuban camp that might constitute torture. Some officials called them "unsung heroes" for risking their careers by crossing senior officials who approved the techniques.

The potentially unlawful methods objected to by the judge advocates were among 33 procedures authorized in a Dec. 2, 2002, memo by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and used on at least two detainees.

A Pentagon report last August found the prisoners gave "important and time-urgent information."

The lawyers' objections were that battlefield interrogation methods, where slapping around a prisoner might be justifiable if it immediately saved lives, were immoral and possibly illegal if used on prisoners far from a war zone and long after their capture, three sources said. Abuse cases reported in FBI memos obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union are now being probed by the Justice Department and the U.S. Southern Command, the Pentagon unit that oversees Guantanamo.

One of the judge advocates, an Air Force officer, left Guantanamo and then filed a Jan. 15, 2003, "Memorandum for the Record," sources said. According to portions read to The New York Daily News, the memorandum noted conflicting interrogation policies at Guantanamo and objected to aggressive techniques.

These were raised repeatedly with the Southern Command by their secret unit, the Criminal Investigation Task Force, a 150-person team of investigators from each branch of the military. Its mission was to work with the FBI and Secret Service to identify detainees' fitness for military war crimes trials.

On the same day of the 2003 Memorandum for the Record, Rumsfeld temporarily rescinded his December 2002 order permitting "stress positions," the use of dogs and "mild" physical contact to intimidate uncooperative prisoners, because of legal concerns.

The objectionable interrogations were done by Joint Task Force-Guantanamo, a separate intelligence unit seeking tips on terror threats, sources said.

Defense Department officials refused repeated requests for comment by The New York Daily News.

The dispute about the methods at Guantanamo began after the September 2002 sacking of the camp's commander, Army Brig. Gen. Rick Baccus. He was replaced in November by Army Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, whose later attempts to "Gitmo-ize" Iraq's prisons tied him to the Abu Ghraib abuse scandal.

In October that year, just before Miller's arrival, the U.S. Southern Command asked the Pentagon to use harsher methods on detainees resisting questioning, and by December Rumsfeld had approved the techniques, which Miller then encouraged.

An Air Force colonel with the war crimes task force told a superior he was "aghast" at the harsher techniques. Long interrogations and isolation had been effective, a senior former officer said. And Miller dismissed the concerns of the judge advocates who were persuaded the interrogation policies violated the law, sources said.