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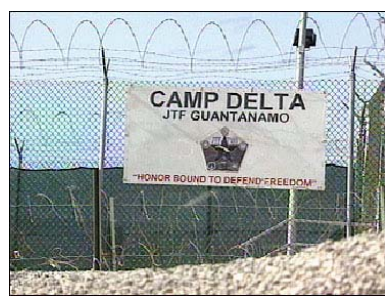
### Camp Delta: Guantanamo Bay

60 Minutes II Takes Cameras Into Secret Prison

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June 23, 2004



Camp Delta is a high-security prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (CBS)

(CBS) The graphic pictures of abuse at **Abu Ghraib prison** in Iraq have overshadowed another controversial American military prison -- one located at the U.S. military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The prison is called "Camp Delta," and nearly 600 suspected terrorists from the war in Afghanistan have been held there for up to 2-and-a-half years.

The U.S. Supreme Court will soon rule whether the government has to give those detainees some sort of legal hearing.

A lot has changed at Camp Delta since **Correspondent Vicki Mabrey** first reported on this story last fall. And some new questions have been raised about conditions there.

But the central issue is the same today as it was back then: Can the

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QUOTE

**"We're still at war, winning the global war on terror. We are very careful to give the nation the best opportunity to win this war."**  
Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller

U.S. government hold people captured during a war indefinitely -- without charge, without trial, and without regard to the **Geneva Conventions**?

The prison is on a bluff overlooking the Caribbean, an isolated corner of the remote U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay. It's America's little corner of Fidel Castro's Cuba.

The Pentagon would not allow **60 Minutes II**, during its visit to Camp Delta last summer, to take pictures of, or talk to, any of the prisoners.

Security at Camp Delta is tight - razor wire, guard towers and searchlights control the perimeter while gunboats patrol the waters below.

The prisoners, from 42 different countries, were captured in Afghanistan. They live behind a green mesh fence, their every move watched by Army MPs. And ever since they were flown -- in hoods and shackles -- to Cuba in January 2002, they've been kept incommunicado and out of sight.

Sgt. Maj. John Van Natta, an Army reservist, showed **60 Minutes II** around. He was the warden at Camp Delta when the TV crew visited last summer. He's since returned to his civilian job, running a large state penitentiary in Indiana.

TV crews were allowed into an empty high-security cellblock. It was empty, Van Natta says, because the cells were just repainted. There are 48 cells per block, about 1,000 cells in all, and plans to build more.

Van Natta says a typical 8x6 cell is similar to prison cells in the U.S. He displayed the standard-issue clothing and toiletries given to each detainee - plus the checkers, cards and even the cups that are earned by good behavior.

At first, Van Natta said, prisoners used cups to throw urine, sewage or other concoctions at the guards. Guards subdued the prisoners who misbehaved. Some of those incidents were apparently videotaped and the tapes may be made public in a few weeks.

Each cell comes equipped with a Koran, prayer beads, and an arrow pointing towards Mecca - 12,793 kilometers from Guantanamo Bay, a reminder of just how far the prisoners are from home.

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Their day begins with the Muslim call to prayer over the camp's PA system. **Capt. James Yee**, who served as the Muslim chaplain, downloaded the precise times of the five daily prayers from an Islamic Web site. He also counseled the prisoners, who called him Chaplain Yussef.

"I do have access to the detainees, to be able to speak and talk with them," says Yee. "I can hold conversations with them."

Those conversations led to a bizarre ordeal for Capt. Yee. Not long after **60 Minutes II** met him, Yee was arrested on suspicion of espionage and aiding the enemy.

The military tossed him in the brig and threatened him with the death penalty. After 76 days in solitary confinement, the military dropped the charges and released him.

However, this hasn't been the fate of most of the prisoners Yee counseled, though the military insists they are well treated, and fed meals that meet strict Islamic guidelines. Camp administrators also say the detainees have gained an average of 13 pounds since coming here, because, they boast, the food is good.

Navy Capt. Al Shimkus, who was in charge of health care, says prisoners get the same level of treatment as soldiers. But there is concern over the large number of suicide attempts -- at least 34 before the Army changed the definition of what it considers a suicide attempt. They say none, however, has succeeded.

"We take every attempt to commit suicide very seriously," says Shimkus. "Despair in general can be a factor, and lots of other things."

The Washington Post reported earlier this month that interrogators at Camp Delta have access to prisoners' medical records, which they use in questioning.

**Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller**, who has been thrust into the prisoner abuse scandal in Iraq, ran Camp Delta when **60 Minutes II** was there last summer.

It was Miller who showed Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld around Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq last month, shortly after **60 Minutes II first reported on abuse of prisoners there**. Miller had been transferred to Iraq in April to run all American prisons there.

Before all of that, the issue facing Gen. Miller wasn't allegations of abuse. It was simply that none of the prisoners at Camp Delta had been charged, tried or convicted of anything. But they were all presumed guilty of something.

"It's not humane to incarcerate somebody indefinitely, without a hearing, and to keep them there with no chance of proving his innocence," says Tom Wilner, a prominent Washington attorney, hired by the families of 12 Kuwaitis being held at Camp Delta.

"How would any of us feel if our husband, our brother, our father, our son, were picked up in another country and was just held there with no opportunity to go before anybody impartial to say, 'Hey, you've got the wrong guy. I didn't do anything.'"

Two months ago, the Bush administration argued before the U.S. Supreme Court that the detainees are not entitled to fundamental American legal rights, like due process, because Camp Delta is on Cuban soil -- even though it's under American control.

The Administration also argued that even though they were captured in a war, they're not prisoners of war, at least as defined by the Geneva Conventions, which regulates treatment of POWs.

"These are enemy combatants, as you know, picked up on the battlefield. They were not fighting for a country as is covered by the Geneva Convention," says Miller. "If I was in the same condition, then I would want to be detained in the same manner that we are detaining these enemy combatants."

"My reaction to that is one of real anger," says Wilner. "The attempt by the American government to say that these people are lucky because we're giving them good medical treatment, a lot of calories, so they're lucky to be there, and they're held in a nice way is absolutely wrong."

The Geneva Conventions say POWs in World War II didn't have to tell their captors anything but name, rank and serial number.

But from the first day Camp Delta opened, the main goal has been to get prisoners to talk - and to tell everything they know about terrorists and their organizations.

Mabrey asked Miller what tactics were used to get detainees to talk. "We interrogate seven days a week, 24 hours a day," says Miller. "We don't talk about the operational measures that we use."

Although he wouldn't be more specific, Miller did claim interrogators don't use physical coercion. And, he said, Pentagon rules limit the length of interrogations to no more than 16 straight hours.

Red Cross inspectors visit the camp regularly, but their reports are not made public.

Detainees who provide useful information are rewarded with a move to a special camp, where they live communally, but under constant surveillance.

But some have no information to give. In fact, a senior American military interrogator at Camp Delta told **60 Minutes II** that as many as 20 percent of the Guantanamo prisoners were sent there by mistake - and that they were innocent

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bystanders, or very small fish.

This may be one reason why: U.S. forces dropped millions of leaflets during the Afghan war offering \$20,000 to Afghans who turned in an alleged terrorist.

"Many of these people were turned over in a bounty hunt, swept up in a bounty hunt, nothing more than that," says Wilner. "A lot of these people down there are innocent. They were picked up by mistake. There's no question about that."

So far, three prisoners have been charged with crimes, and a total of 137, including three teenagers, have been sent home. Army officials insist none of them was innocent, but they were released because they were no longer a threat to Americans.

Since **60 Minutes II** couldn't talk to prisoners at Guantanamo, it tracked down some who've been released.

Shah Mohammed is back home in a remote province of Pakistan, where **CBS News producer Homaira Usman** found him. He admits working for the Taliban as a cook. But he insists he wasn't a soldier, and had no contact with al Qaeda. He says he was captured by pro-American Afghan fighters in the Northern Alliance.

"Then we were sold to the Americans, who interrogated us and took us to Kandahar," says Mohammed, speaking through a translator. "I thought they would release us because I am innocent, but instead they took us to Cuba."

There, he says, he was interrogated often. Fearing he would never see his family again, Mohammed says he tried to hang himself several times. Then, after 16 months, he was released.

However, Wilner says it's wrong to sacrifice basic fairness because of the threat of terrorism: "This is a different war, and we've got to do everything necessary to protect ourselves. All we're asking for is a process. We simply can't say, 'Throw everyone in jail because some of them might be bad guys.'"

What does Miller say to people who believe that this is "un-American" because prisoners are not given due process? "We're still at war, winning the global war on terror," he says. "We are very careful to give the nation the best opportunity to win this war."

And the Pentagon says it will keep prisoners in Guantanamo until that war is won. Inside Camp Delta, both prisoners and guards know that could be a long, long time.

When asked if this could be a life sentence for some detainees, Sgt. Maj. John Van Natta answered, "It very likely could be."

Gen. Miller told **60 Minutes II** last summer that Camp Delta prisoners would get a hearing in military tribunals that would begin soon.

Nearly a year later, no tribunals have been held. Now, the U.S. Supreme Court will decide whether prisoners at Camp Delta can get their day in court.

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