



# IRAQ INVESTIGATIONS



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Charges Dismissed Against Marine in Haditha, Iraq Investigation**

CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. (Aug. 9, 2007) – Charges against a Marine captain stemming from the command response to the death of Iraqi civilians in Haditha, Iraq in November, 2005, have been dismissed.

Capt. Randy W. Stone was charged with violation of a lawful order and two specifications of negligent dereliction of duty.

As Consolidated Disposition Authority for the Haditha cases, Lt. Gen. James Mattis, dismissed the charges against Stone today.

Lt. Gen. Mattis has released the following statement regarding the dismissal of charges:

"I have thoroughly reviewed and considered all of the evidence surrounding the Haditha incident and Captain Stone's conduct with respect to command reporting of and response to the incident. It is clear to me that any error of omission or commission by Captain Stone does not warrant action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Article 32 Investigating Officer recommended that the case not be tried at court-martial. I am aware of the line that separates the merely remiss from the clearly criminal, and I do not believe that any mistakes Captain Stone made with respect to the incident rise to the level of criminal behavior.

In determining the appropriate disposition of this case, I have also considered Captain Stone's conduct and performance in full context. During the time period at issue, Captain Stone was in his first assignment serving as a Marine judge advocate under difficult circumstances as a staff member of an infantry battalion engaged in combat operations. He willingly volunteered for this assignment and took on challenging duties with enthusiasm. Similarly, his attentiveness to training the Marines in the law of war and rules of engagement and willingness to share their hardship to better appreciate the challenges facing them are notable. By patrolling alongside the infantrymen in his Battalion, he helped them embrace the imperative of ethical behavior in combat. In this manner, he directly contributed to our Nation's effort to fight a shadowy enemy who hides among and endangers innocent people and does not comply with any aspect of the law of war.

Captain Stone and his fellow Marines served in the most ethically challenging combat environment in the world. Nonetheless, Marines are expected to withstand the extreme and fatiguing pressures inherent in counterinsurgency operations, protecting the innocent, while tirelessly fighting the enemy with relentless vigor. I have no doubt that he now understands the absolute necessity for objective inquiry into the combat actions of our Marines in such an environment, especially when innocent lives are lost.

Captain Stone's experience in this incident offers many hard learned lessons that I am confident will serve him well in the future. It is incumbent on him to ensure that the lessons he has learned provide guidance for future judge advocates who may serve under similar circumstances in an infantry battalion in combat.

I have impressed upon Captain Stone the fact that the Marine Corps' investigation into the Haditha incident has been driven solely by the interests of justice. Now that his case is resolved, I know that he will continue to serve with motivation and dedication, and with the understanding that he has much to contribute to the success of his unit and the Marine Corps."

More information on the investigation and charges against other Marines involved can be found at: <http://www.usmc.mil/lapa/iraq-investigations.htm>

-30-

[RETURN TO MAIN PAGE](#)