The Army Corrections Command:
Professionalism, Justice, and Strategic Risk Mitigation

By Captain Joshua I. Bogle and Staff Sergeant Caitlin E. Sias

The contents of this article do not represent the official views of, nor are they endorsed by, the U.S. Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Corrections and detention operations have been integral to the U.S. military since 1776, during both peace and war. Headquarters, Department of the Army established the Army Corrections Command (ACC) to exercise command and control over all Army correctional facilities. The ACC is responsible for confining and rehabilitating military personnel convicted at courts-martial while ensuring discipline, security, and the fair administration of justice within the military justice system. The Army Corrections Brigade (ACB), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is the home of military corrections and represents the largest subordinate unit of the ACC. The ACB maintains command and control of the United States Disciplinary Barracks and the Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility, managing more than 685 inmates around the clock.

The ACB exemplifies expertise in high-risk close confinement and contributes globally to correctional practices. Military corrections enforce both federal and military laws under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ),[1] reflecting the military's commitment to recruit individuals of strong moral character and reform those who violate laws. The ACB plays a vital role in the military justice system, ensuring that offenders face consequences while being rehabilitated and deterred from reoffending.

The highly trained personnel of the ACB support commanders and their staffs in planning and executing detention efforts across all military scenarios. The ACB provides advisors to U.S. Army National Guard and Army Reserve units during mobilization and deployments. In conflict zones, correctional experts work with allied forces to manage detainees from capture to detention facilities, freeing combat units from detainee operations. Military police detention efforts aid stability by turning the challenge of interning combatants into an opportunity for reintegration as informed, productive citizens.

Ultimately, the ACB mitigates strategic risk for the U.S. Army and the Department of Defense (DOD) by providing correctional expertise in high-risk close confinement, serving as the culmination of the military justice system and providing advice and assistance to support the active-duty component through detention operations in large-scale combat operations.

Harnessing Talent and Experience in High-Risk Close Confinement

Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 31E–Corrections and Detention Specialists undergo 7 weeks of Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training before participating in further skill development at correctional facilities. Upon assignment, they complete a rigorous, two-part training program: a week-long preservice course and 5 days of immersive on-the-job training. These programs equip Soldiers with essential skills such as security protocols, inmate management, and emergency response, fostering decision making and confidence.

Detainee operations training

The ACC excels in handling high-risk inmates in close confinement, such as those housed in the special housing unit, where specialized skills are required. Soldiers selected for special housing unit duty complete a multiphase training regimen, including a 2-day certification and on-the-job training focused on operations, communication, and the identification of high-risk behaviors. This ensures that ACC personnel are prepared to handle complex situations in demanding environments. Behavioral health staff further enhance the capabilities of the ACC by addressing the psychological needs of inmates, managing those prone to violence,

and aiding their rehabilitation. These efforts support transitions from a special housing unit to the general population, society, or military service.

Culminating the Military Justice System

Correctional facilities are crucial to the justice system, where sentences are enforced while offenders are rehabilitated to reenter society. Corrections personnel follow court rulings, ensuring that punishment is carried out and public safety is upheld.[2] Correctional rehabilitation programs (such as education, job training, and therapy) prepare inmates for successful reintegration into society, with the goal of reducing recidivism. Parole hearings and sentence modifications involve corrections professionals, whose reports influence decisions about release.

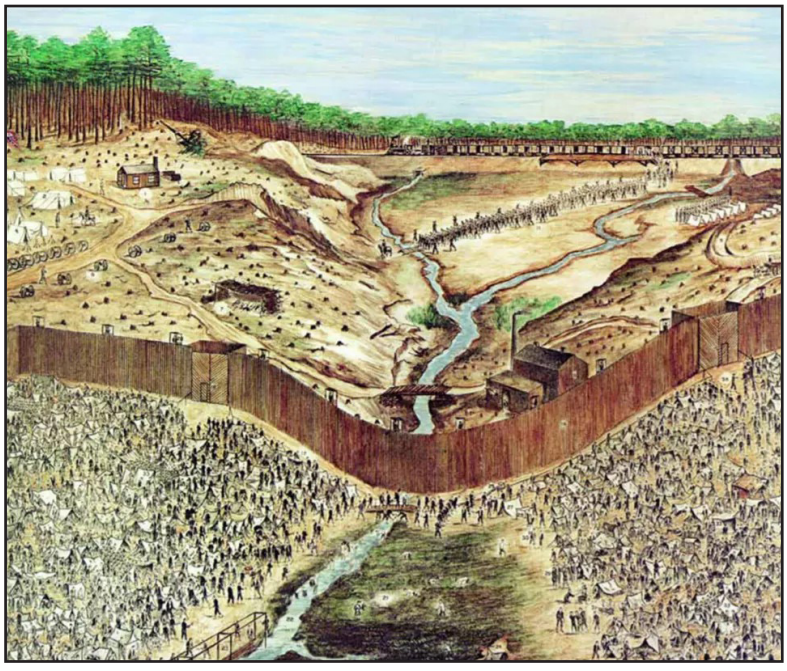
This commitment to rehabilitation and reintegration extends beyond the walls of confinement. If an offender is granted supervision or parole, the Army Corrections System (ACS) continues to regularly monitor them upon their release through electronic tracking, drug testing, and other methods. During this time, the ACS coordinates with law enforcement agencies to assist in monitoring high-risk offenders and respond to violations of parole conditions. Parole violators are reincarcerated to serve out the remainder of their sentence along with any additional time imposed by the courts for reimprisonment offenses. To ensure that inmates fulfill their confinement obligations, the inmate administrators within the ACC recalculate release dates to account for lost good conduct time, earned time, or special acts of abatement.[3]

Linking Corrections and Detention Operations

Corrections and detention operations involve the confinement and management of individuals, but they differ in their scope and legal foundations. The ACS focuses on safely and securely incarcerating and rehabilitating U.S. military prisoners and protecting the community through deterrence.[4] In contrast, military detention operations typically occur within a warzone and involve individuals captured during combat or deemed a security threat. These operations are governed by international law, including the Geneva Conventions, which dictate humane treatment and the handling of detainees. Two relevant examples of U.S. military detention operations include those at Andersonville Prison, also known as Camp Sumter, a Confederate prison camp during the American Civil War located in Andersonville, Georgia, and at Abu Ghraib prison, a prison complex located 20 miles west of Baghdad, Iraq, used during the Iraq War.

Historical examples highlight the need for trained personnel and codified systems in detention. During the Civil War, prisoners at Andersonville Prison suffered horrific conditions caused by an untrained guard force, insufficient logistical support, and overcrowded facilities. Designed for 10,000 prisoners, it swelled to over three times its capacity within 6 months, leading to disease outbreaks and malnutrition. By the end of the war, more than 13,000 prisoners died from poor sanitation, overcrowding, exposure to disease, freezing temperatures, and hunger.[5]

Operational challenges at Andersonville Prison were mirrored at Abu Ghraib after the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Reports in November 2003 revealed multiple cases of abuse, including torture, sexual violence, and detainee deaths caused by military police Soldiers from the 800th Military Police Brigade, Uniondale, New York.[6] Inadequate training in prisoner handling procedures, a limited understanding of Geneva Convention provisions, and Soldier quality-of-life issues—driven by logistical constraints of the broader conflict—produced an environment conducive to prisoner abuse.[7] These incidents underscore the critical role of trained correctional specialists in minimizing risks during detainee operations.



Andersonville Prison

As operations shift between counterinsurgency and large-scale combat operations, the United States must address adversaries across space, cyberspace, air, maritime, and land domains in addition to the physical, information, and human dimensions.[8] Units must train to safeguard and transfer detainees as the battlefield evolves. Large-scale combat operations pose sustainment challenges in securing resources for construction materials, medical support, and mortuary affairs for temporary and permanent detainee facilities, requiring innovative logistical solutions.

Detention operations support the operational tenets of agility, convergence, and endurance.[9] Agility is achieved by quickly collapsing and relocating detainee collection points to adapt to the evolving battlefield. Convergence ensures that detainee operations synchronize with battlefield progress, advancing detainee collection points alongside the forward line of troops to support combat by processing captured enemy detainees.

Mitigating Strategic Risk

Corrections operations are regulated by Army Regulation (AR) 190-47[10] and Department of Defense Instruction Number (DODI) 1325.07,[11] which govern the ACS. The ACS complies with the Prison Rape Elimination Act, of 2003, which establishes national standards for prison rape prevention and response.[12] Additionally, the ACS adheres to accreditation standards set forth by the American Correctional Association. Per AR 190-47, the ACS protects communities by incarcerating U.S. military prisoners; providing safe, secure environments; and fostering rehabilitation through programs, administrative reviews, parole supervision, and sex offender registration.

The National Defense Strategy directs DOD efforts to mitigate strategic risks. Specifically, the 2022 National Defense Strategy emphasizes defending the homeland, deterring strategic attacks, and building a resilient joint force.[13] It warns that internal issues can undermine mission cohesion and success.[14] The ACB and ACC reduce strategic risk by managing corrections and detention operations for the DOD.

Aligned with the National Defense Strategy priorities, the ACB continuously conducts corrections operations, maintaining custody and discipline under the UCMJ. The ACC ensures safe and humane incarceration worldwide while preparing prisoners for reintegration into society or the armed forces. These efforts uphold the law, deter offenses, and protect national security by safeguarding sensitive information and preventing radicalization in civilian prisons. Correctional facilities enhance force readiness by rehabilitating prisoners to become productive citizens. The ACC also provides professional corrections experts to commanders, ensuring humane detainee treatment on battlefields, reinforcing national values, and strengthening public trust in the military.

In conclusion, skilled correction and detention professionals are essential to military corrections at home and detainee operations abroad. As the final stage of the military justice system, the ACC plays a critical role in deterring indiscipline and criminal activity. The expertise gained in ACC facilities, combined with specialized training, enables Corrections Specialists to effectively advise commanders on detention operations. As a result, the ACC reduces strategic risk and reinforces its relevance in the modern military framework.

Endnotes:

[1]AR 27-10, *Military Justice*, 8 January 2025.

[2]Doris L. MacKenzie, "From Theory to Policy: Evidence-Based Corrections," in *Introduction to Criminal Justice: A Sociological Perspective*, 2013, Stanford University Press, p. 5-6.

[3]AR 190-47, *The Army Corrections System*, 17 March 2023, p. 53.

[4]Ibid, p. 3.

[5]"History of the Andersonville Prison," *National Park Service website*, <https://www.nps.gov/ande/learn/historyculture/camp_sumter_history.htm>, accessed on 2 June 2025.

[6]Thomas O'Dea, "Andersonville: Prisoner of War Camp," *National Park Service website*, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/andersonville-prisoner-of-war-camp-teaching-with-historic-places.htm>, accessed on 2 June 2025.

[7]Paul T. Bartone, "Lessons of Abu Ghraib: Understanding and Preventing Prisoner Abuse in Military Operations," *Defense Horizons*, 1 November 2008, p. 1-8.

[8]Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, 1 October 2022, p. X.

[9]Ibid, p. 3-2.

[10]AR 190-47, *The Army Corrections System*, 17 March 2023.

[11]DODI 1325.07, *Administration of Military Correctional Facilities and Clemency and Parole Authority*, 11 March 2023.

[12]Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, Public Law 108-79, 108th Congress, 45 United States Code §§ 15601-15609, 2003.

[13]United States Department of Defense, *2022 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Including the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review*, 2022, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/trecms/pdf/AD1183514.pdf>, accessed on 9 June 2025.

[14]Ibid.

Captain Bogle is the commander of Headquarters Company, Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility Battalion (Corrections), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He holds a bachelor's degree in defense and strategic studies from the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, and a master's degree in criminal justice administration from Columbia College, Missouri.

Staff Sergeant Sias is the battalion physical security inspector for Headquarters Company, Midwest Joint Regional Correctional Facility Battalion (Corrections). She holds an associate's degree in liberal arts from Upper Iowa University, Fayette; a bachelor's degree in project management from The University of Arizona Global Campus: and a master's degree in business administration from Webster University.

This article was edited with the assistance of AI tools, and subsequently reviewed and edited by relevant DoD personnel to ensure accuracy, clarity, and compliance with DoD policies and guidance.