

QUESTION TIME BRIEF 3.9

IRAQ: SPECIAL FORCES
INVOLVEMENT IN DETENTION
OF ILLEGAL SUSPECTS IN IRAQ
APRIL 2003

11 May

3.9

**IRAQ - SPECIAL FORCES INVOLVEMENT IN DETENTION OF SUSPECTS
IN IRAQ APRIL 2003**

POSSIBLE QUESTION: Were Australian Special Forces involved in the capture or detention of any Iraqi soldiers during the Iraq War in 2003?

TALKING POINTS:

- Australian Special Forces did not capture any Iraqi soldiers, or Fedayeen, during the War in Iraq. Australian Special Forces employed a policy of avoiding contact with the enemy; however, occasionally they were requested to assist US Special Forces in detention tasks.
- On the 11 April 2003, a number of Australians operating in the western desert helped detain 59 Fedayeen, four non-Iraqis and three Baath Party officials for 10 hours. The 66 detainees were subsequently transported to a US detention centre by helicopter.
- Two of the detainees had minor ailments, a chest cold and a sore foot, which a Special Forces medic attended to. All the personal effects, including passports, found on the detainees were listed, accounted for and transported with them on the helicopters. This included significant quantities of US currency and jewellery.
- While held, all detainees were given blankets and water and fed rice and lamb sourced from local sheikhs. In addition, during nightfall when the temperature dropped the detainees were placed inside vehicles to provide them with shelter.
- A Special Forces Arabic linguist questioned the detainees in relation to other threat forces in the area but no interrogation was conducted. All detainees were handed over at the helicopters in good health.

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