

Army flooded with calls after 'sex scandal'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 2,000 calls, hundreds considered worth investigation, have poured into an Army hotline set up after revelation of the sex scandal at a Maryland training center, the Army said Monday.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said the Army was "casting its net very wide" to find problems elsewhere.

A separate investigation is looking into allegations of sexual misconduct, ranging from rape to fraternization, among supervisors at an Army training base in Missouri, but no charges have been filed, Army sources said.

Joint Chiefs Chairman John Shalikashvili, making the rounds of television talk shows in honor of Veterans Day, was asked whether he had any evidence sexual abuse was occurring at other training sites.

"We certainly have to assume that it could be happening somewhere else, and that's why the Army is casting its net very wide all across the Army, and certainly all training centers, to get to

the bottom of this," the four-star Army general said on CBS' "This Morning." "But right now, I don't think we have all the evidence, or it's very difficult to determine just how big that problem really is," he added.

Some 1,999 phone calls had been made to a toll-free hotline set up at the Army's Aberdeen Proving Ground, near Baltimore.

Ed Starnes, an Aberdeen spokesman, said calls have been constantly coming in from across the country since the scandal broke last week.

"As soon as you are off, another rings," he said Monday, adding that some complaints go back to World War II.

Of the calls received between Thursday and 4 p.m. Monday, 246 were deemed serious enough to be referred to the Army's Criminal Investigative Division for further inquiry. The rest needed no follow-up, officials said.

Of the calls pertaining to sexual complaints, 56 were Aberdeen-related and 89 stemmed from complaints about

other Army facilities.

The rest of the calls had to do with administrative requests, complaints concerning nonsexual matters and crank calls. The Army refused to provide details about the complaints that were being referred for investigation.

The Army has filed criminal charges against three military trainers and administrative charges against two more—all married—at the Ordnance Center in Aberdeen. The men, four drill instructors and a captain, were suspended along with 15 other instructors, who were placed on paid administrative duty.

The men facing charges, ranging from rape to sending improper love letters to trainees, were accused of harassing at least a dozen women in their first weeks of training. The average age of the women was 21.

One instructor threatened to kill three trainees if they told superiors he was having sex with them, the Army said in documents released over the weekend.

"Our task now is to ensure that we find out exactly just how widespread it is and bring to justice all those who should be brought to justice all those who should be brought to justice."

JOHN SHALIKASHVILI
Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman

"It's a great, great tragedy and our task now is to ensure that we find out exactly just how widespread it is and bring to justice all those who should be brought to justice," Shalikashvili said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

At Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., on ongoing investigation is looking into several allegations of sexual misconduct, from rape to fraternization, a senior Army official said Monday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said the Missouri investigation had been going on since September and was not started because of similar allegations emerging from Aberdeen. "There's no connection between the two," he said.

Army investigators at Aberdeen have said they plan to interview as many as 1,000 women who were trained at the post since the beginning of 1995, a process that could take months.

Texaco official cleared of using racial slur

Investigators say a tape recording indicates that no slur was said at a 1994 meeting.

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. (AP) — A senior executive at Texaco Inc. did not use a racial slur at a 1994 meeting, investigators hired by the company said Monday.

Their analysis of a tape recording, enhanced by sound experts, contradicts earlier claims that former Texaco treasurer Robert Ulrich referred to minority employees as "niggers."

The investigators concluded that the word Ulrich used on tape was actually "Nicholas," according to the report issued by outside lawyer Michael Armstrong. It was part of a reference to St. Nicholas during a disparagement of the black cultural festival Kwanzaa.

"The phrase '(expletive) niggers' just doesn't exist on the tape," Armstrong said Monday.

Texaco chairman Peter Bijur said he still found the words on the tape troubling.

"The findings merely set the record straight as to the exact words spoken in the conversations," he said in a statement released today.

The Wall Street Journal reported Monday that federal prosecutors planned to file criminal charges against at least one individual in the Texaco

case this week, perhaps as early as Tuesday.

Prosecutors have been investigating whether to file obstruction-of-justice charges against Texaco employees who allegedly are heard on tape plotting to destroy documents in a \$520 million discrimination lawsuit filed by nearly 1,500 black employees.

Court papers filed last week relating to the lawsuit include a transcript of a conversation between a man identified as Ulrich and other executives discussing, among other things, holidays like Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

The version of the transcript filed in court has Ulrich saying, "I'm still having trouble with Hanukkah. Now, we have Kwanzaa. (Expletive) niggers, they (expletive) all over us with this."

The investigators' transcript quotes him as saying, "I'm still struggling with Hanukkah, and now we have Kwanzaa. I mean, I lost Christmas. Poor St. Nicholas, they (expletive) all over his beard."

The preliminary report, prepared by Armstrong, also attempted to explain Ulrich's reference to minority employees as "black jelly beans."

Ulrich was using an analogy from a diversity training program attended by Texaco executives, the investigators' report said. Such programs commonly use jelly beans to symbolize how different colors can be mixed without losing their identities.

"The references to 'jelly beans' do not appear to us to have been intended as a racial slur," Armstrong's report concludes.

Reno reappointment is in limbo

WASHINGTON (AP) — When a reporter asked Janet Reno if she would remain attorney general, she replied: Yes, "if the president wanted me to stay."

A stock answer, but it still irked White House aides who felt she was boxing President Clinton into a corner.

Shaking up the Cabinet—an almost painless task so far—is growing more ticklish as Clinton decides whether to reappoint Reno in the midst of Whitewater and other investigations.

Air Force One was still en route from Arkansas to Washington, within hours of the election, when word got out that three Cabinet members were leaving. Three more soon followed, and the news quickly spread about who was in and who

was out.

But Reno remained a huge question mark.

Asked about her status Friday, Clinton passed up a chance to endorse her.

"I should have no comment on any personnel decisions," said the president, who is making the judgment against a backdrop of legal difficulties.

If he reappoints her, Clinton will have to deal with an attorney general whom some aides view as a bit too independent. But if she goes, critics will accuse him of ousting her to help escape legal woes.

"It would be viewed by some in a very dark light," said Joseph diGenova, a Republican who has served as a special prosecutor. "But I don't think he cares."

The uneasy consensus among White House aides is that Reno will survive. But it is remarkable that there is any doubt at all.

She is a star of the Clinton Cabinet, mobbed by friendly crowds outside Washington and respected by many lawmakers inside the Beltway. Only the president gets more invitations for speaking engagements.

But one of Reno's greatest assets, a fierce sense of independence, may have caused some of her trouble.

She shouldered the blame for the 1993 disaster at Waco, Texas, in the hours after the Branch Davidian complex fire. The president, who let Reno go public alone, looked meek by contrast.

Overfishing may cause caviar shortage

Illegal trade, lack of regulations threaten sturgeon with extinction

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gourmets may be faced with a shortage of caviar this holiday season because of aggressive fishing by Russian and Iranian trawlers, the World Wildlife Fund said Monday.

Even if the expensive delicacy is found, it may not be genuine caviar, which is the unfertilized eggs of sturgeon. Rather, conservationists warned, it might just be ordinary fish eggs labeled as caviar.

The best Beluga caviar from Russia costs more than \$80 an ounce in American gourmet shops. Other caviar can sell for as little as \$10 an ounce. Last year, nearly \$12 million worth of caviar was brought into the United States, but mark-ups made the value of retail sales nearly three times that much.

Total world trade was about \$125

million, according to the World Wildlife Fund's report.

"After awhile, there just won't be any more of those sturgeons," said Andrea Gaski, director of the fund's wildlife monitoring program and author of the report. "We can't know just when."

"With significant illegal trade, little regulation, tremendous profits and increasing demand, sturgeon species are perched precariously on the edge of extinction," her report said.

Caviar can be obtained only by killing the female sturgeon while she is carrying the unfertilized eggs. The killing of other sturgeons is depleting the source of the mature, egg-bearing females, which make up only about 7 percent of sturgeons found in the sea, according to the report.

Aggressive fishing by Russian and

Iranian trawlers kills all sturgeons, not just the egg-bearing females, the report said.

The number of adult sturgeon in the Caspian Sea, where most caviar is harvested, is estimated to have dropped from 142 million in 1978 to 43.5 million in 1994.

Though the eggs of other fish are sometimes called caviar, experts and the U.S. customs only allow the label for the unfertilized eggs of sturgeon. But Switzerland and the Nordic countries lump sturgeon roe with other fish eggs.

"The supply of superior caviar is so low, traders are now mislabeling lower-quality eggs and charging superior prices," she said. "Buyers may not be getting what they're paying for."

Europa may harbor life, hidden ocean

Scientists plan to use an unarmed missile to search for life on Jupiter's moon.

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (AP) — Scientists want to shoot the moon.

Using a missile to smash off a piece of icy crust from Jupiter's moon Europa, they hope to discover a hidden ocean and perhaps even life.

Scientists from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena are considering knocking chunks of the crust into

space. A spacecraft will retrieve the chunks and bring them back to Earth.

The idea, so far unfunded, will be discussed Tuesday at the San Juan Institute during a meeting of geologists, planetary scientists and exobiologists considering the potential for life on Europa.

"It's an inspired plan that could bring important clues about what might be the only other body in our solar system with an ocean," said Doug Nash, the institute's director.

The idea involves a space probe that would launch a 20-pound, unarmed missile into Europa, hurling pieces of the surface 30 miles into

space. Then it would use a gel to collect shards of ice as it streaked through the resulting debris cloud.

The probe would return the sample to Earth by parachuting into the atmosphere.

The Galileo spacecraft is already exploring Jupiter and its moons. Galileo will make its closest pass to Europa on Dec. 19, when it will fly within 435 miles of the surface.

Scientists are eager to see close-up shots that might strengthen evidence that a crust of icy slabs is sliding on a layer of slush or water that might harbor hidden life.

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