

Army to Investigate Gay Porn Allegations

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Army officials are investigating allegations that members of the celebrated 82nd Airborne Division appear on a gay pornography Web site, a spokeswoman said Friday.

Authorities at Fort Bragg have begun an inquiry into whether the paratroopers' actions violated the military conduct code.

Division spokeswoman Maj. Amy Hannah declined to say how many paratroopers are involved or identify their unit within the division. A defense official speaking on condition of anonymity said up to seven soldiers are involved.

Hannah said soldiers questioned will be allowed to seek legal assistance, but she declined to say if any one had been charged.

"Once the investigation is complete, the chain of command will take appropriate action," Hannah said.

The military-themed Web site does not appear to make any direct reference to the 82nd Airborne or Fort Bragg. The registered owner of the Web site's domain name lists an address in Fayetteville, the city that adjoins Fort Bragg.

E-mails to the registered owner were returned Friday as undeliverable, and the phone number listed on the domain-name registration is no longer in service.

The Web site includes a disclaimer, asking users to agree that they are not agents of the U.S. government, Department of Defense, members of law enforcement or reporters.

Martha Rudd, an Army spokeswoman at the Pentagon, said soldiers accused of homosexual activity might be removed from their units, although she did not have specific information about the investigation of the 82nd. When asked if the soldiers involved had been moved out of barracks, Hannah declined to comment.

"We are concerned about the privacy and rights of each trooper involved and that they are treated with dignity and respect," Hannah said.

Maj. Todd Vician, a Defense Department spokesman in Washington, said the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy states that "homosexual orientation alone is not a bar to service, but homosexual conduct is incompatible with military service."

"We define homosexual conduct as homosexual acts or verbal or nonverbal communication that a member is homosexual," Vician said.

The 82nd Airborne is one of the most celebrated units in the military. Its 15,000 troops are trained to deploy anywhere in the world within 18 hours.

Soldiers from the division have served extensively in Iraq and Afghanistan, and several thousand troops remain overseas.