



Guards get combat pay, just like troops in Afghanistan, without the risk of being blown up. Some commanders get to bring their families to this war-on-terror deployment. And each captive gets \$38.45 worth of food a day.

The Pentagon detention center that started out in January 2002 as a collection of crude open-air cells guarded by Marines in a muddy tent city is today arguably the most expensive prison on Earth, costing taxpayers \$800,000 annually for each of the 171 captives by Obama administration reckoning. That's more than 30 times the cost of keeping a captive on U.S. soil.

It's still funded as an open-ended battlefield necessity, although the last prisoner arrived in March 2008. But it functions more like a gated community in an American suburb than a forward-operating base in one of Afghanistan's violent provinces.

Congress, charged now with cutting \$1.5 trillion from the budget by Christmas, provided \$139 million to operate the center last year, and has made every effort to keep it open - even as a former deputy commander of the detention center calls it "expensive" and "inefficient."

"It's a slow-motion Berlin Airlift - that's been going on for 10 years," says retired Army Brig. Gen. Greg Zanetti, a West Point graduate who in 2008 was deputy commander at the detention center.

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