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Top Marine General's Blunt Comments Draw Fire

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SAN DIEGO -- At a panel discussion in San Diego Tuesday, a top Marine general tells an audience that, among other things, it is "fun to shoot some people."

Images: Marine General's Controversy
Video: Marine General's Controversy

The comment, made by Lt. Gen. James Mattis, came in reference to fighting insurgents in Iraq. He went on to say, "Actually, its a lot of fun to fight. You know, it's a hell of a hoot. I like brawling."

"You go into Afghanistan, you got guys who slap women around for 5 years because they didn't wear a veil," Mattis continued. "You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them."

About 200 people gathered for the discussion, held at the San Diego Convention Center. While many military members laughed at the comments, a military expert interviewed by NBC 7/39 in San Diego called the comments "flippant."

"I was a little surprised," said Retired Vice Adm. Edward H. Martin. "I don't think any of us who have ever fought in wars liked to kill anybody."

Mattis also discussed operational tactics of the war, calling on military members not to underestimate the capacity of terrorists.

Mattis leads Camp Pendleton's 1st Marine Division in Iraq. He is in charge of the Marine Corps combat development and is based in Quantico, Va.

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