

# **Dallas FBI chief rapped in McVeigh case to quit**

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DALLAS -- Danny Defenbaugh, the special agent in charge of the Dallas FBI office who was heavily criticized in a report last month for withholding information in the Timothy McVeigh trial, announced his retirement Wednesday.

The 32-year FBI veteran said he would step down at the end of April.

"It's been a long time," he said, declining to comment further.

Defenbaugh, 51, was named head of the Dallas FBI office in 1998, after leading the Oklahoma City bombing investigation.

In an e-mail Tuesday night to colleagues, Defenbaugh wrote: "I have been so fortunate to live a dream beyond my dreams. I plan on staying in the area and begin my search for a new and challenging career."

In a March 19 report, the Justice Department recommended Defenbaugh and three other agents be disciplined for the FBI's failure to turn over thousands of pages of documents to McVeigh's lawyers until days before his scheduled execution.

Defenbaugh was not pressured to step down as a result of the report, FBI spokeswoman Lori Bailey said.

"This was his call," she said. "All he said was he's had a great career and he's ready to retire and ready to move on."

The 192-page report found no evidence that FBI agents meant to hide information.

The report said most of the mislaid or destroyed paperwork contained no significant or new information for McVeigh's defense team. However, it acknowledged that the lengthy investigation did not determine whether all destroyed documents had been disclosed.

Defenbaugh released a statement March 19 accepting the criticism. "I made decisions concerning the documents based on my honest evaluation of the situation, my many years of experience and out of my desire to do the right thing," he said.

The inspector general, Glenn A. Fine, recommended disciplinary action for four FBI supervisors for what he called a "significant neglect of their duties."

Bailey said Wednesday that no disciplinary action has been taken.

Defenbaugh has no disciplinary actions on his record and was awarded the Justice Department's highest honor for his work on the Oklahoma City bombing.

Three of the supervisors discovered problems with FBI documents as early as January 2001, but no one notified FBI headquarters, Justice Department officials or the chief prosecutor in the McVeigh trial until five months later, the report said.

Convicted in the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people and injured hundreds more, McVeigh had been scheduled to be executed May 16, 2001. But the delayed turnover of documents resulted in an extraordinary delay in his execution until June 11. Most of the documents in question were created by the FBI in April and May 1995.

Former U.S. Attorney Paul Coggins, who worked closely with Defenbaugh from 1998 through 2001, credited him with establishing a counter-terrorism task force with local police that has since become a national model. He said Defenbaugh also was behind creation of a forensics computer crime lab and creating a permanent cybercrimes task force.

Defenbaugh, an Ohio native, joined the FBI in June 1969 as a clerk and became an agent in 1976. A certified bomb technician, he has served in FBI positions in Chicago; Miami; Mobile, Ala.; and FBI headquarters in Washington.