

From: [Raughter, John B.](#)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Legion hails Supreme Court decision to hold photographs

Decision affirms Legion's fight to protect troops from publication of harmful images

WASHINGTON (November 30, 2009) -- The American Legion today praised the Supreme Court for vacating and remanding an appeals court ruling which would have ordered the release of photographs of detainees allegedly being abused by their U.S. captors. The Supreme Court ordered the 2nd U.S. Court of Appeals to take another look at the case due to a recent change in federal law, advocated by The American Legion, which allows the government to withhold the release of the photographs.

"This is a victory for our troops," said National Commander Clarence E. Hill. "Too often images are used to inflame tensions in the Middle East and are used as propaganda by terrorists. Whether these pictures depicted torture or not, we may never know. But we do know that the president, some members of Congress and many military leaders believed it would put our troops at greater risk. This may be a defeat for the ACLU but it is a victory for America."

In a May 8 editorial in *The Wall Street Journal*, then-National Commander David K. Rehbein asked, "A picture may be worth a thousand words, but is it worth the life of a single American soldier? Is any photograph worth the life of your Marine Corps daughter? Or your neighbor's deployed husband?"

The editorial garnered mentions in Time Magazine, blogs and other media. As Rehbein appeared at a media event in the Capitol with U.S. Rep. Marsha Blackburn to criticize the pending release, The White House announced it had reversed its earlier decision to release the photographs which were requested by the American Civil Liberties Union.

"We are still very much at war," Hill added. "The American Legion is calling on all Americans to remain aware of that and remember that our troops are in harm's way and need all the support that their fellow citizens can offer. The American Legion will always oppose any efforts to undermine our troops. It's one thing to say that you support the troops. It's another thing to mean it."

With a current membership of 2.5-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

Media contact: John Raughter (317) 630-1350, Cell (317) 441-8847 or Marty Callaghan, (202) 861-2700, Cell (317) 445-3029. A high resolution photo of Nat. Cmdr. Hill is available at www.legion.org.