

From: Raughter, John B.

To: Department Adjutants; Department Commanders; Department Headquarters; Department Membership Chairmen; Department Service Officers; Detachment Adjutants; Division Directors; Executive Directors; Brooks, Steve B.; Buckler, Dubbie; Murrell, Debra N.; National Commander Candidate; National Executive Committee; National Officers; National Vice Commanders; Past National Commanders; Piercy, Jacob A.; SAL National Commander; Roberts, Craig R.

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Subject: Release: Legion to DoD: Nonaction Medal is 'Nonstarter'

Attachments:

The American Legion to DoD: Nonaction Medal is 'Nonstarter'

INDIANAPOLIS (May 13, 2010) - Calling a proposal to award U.S. troops medals for holding fire in a war zone "misguided," the head of the nation's largest veterans organization voiced concern that overly restrictive rules of engagement would ultimately cost lives.

"Nobody likes to see innocent civilians killed in a war zone but the blame for these tragedies lies with the terrorists who caused the war in the first place," American Legion National Commander Clarence E. Hill said. "The proposal to award medals for holding fire is troubling because it is symptomatic of a growing culture in the military that will punish troops for making split-second decisions while they are expected to defend themselves and their comrades. This proposal is an insult to our men and women in combat who already do an extraordinary job of exercising restraint. Too much restraint will get our own people killed."

Hill also worried that rewarding those who don't use force sends the wrong message to those that do. "Vietnam veterans were outrageously slandered as 'babykillers,'" he said. "This was tragic because the overwhelming majority of those who served there tried to prevent innocent casualties. Now, by awarding those who supposedly practice restraint, we would be implying that our heroes who have to fire their weapons are somehow failing in their mission or coming up short. It's a bad idea and the Pentagon should kill 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.

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