

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2014

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We write to demand that you complete the report required by law under Section 565 of the FY 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA required a review of eligibility by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) for the Purple Heart to victims of the 2009 attack at Fort Hood, Texas, and the 2009 attack outside of a Little Rock, Arkansas military recruiting station. This report was due to Congress no later than 180 days after President Barack Obama signed the bill into law on December 26, 2013. Your agency has violated the law by not completing the report in the allotted number of days and has informed Congress that it plans to continue the delay of this report until July 2015.

In 2011, Abdulhakim Muhammad pled guilty to charges of capital murder and attempted capital murder for the shooting at a Little Rock military recruiting station. Throughout his trial, Muhammad repeatedly admitted that he was a soldier in the cause of war—or jihad—against the United States and that he targeted Privates William Andrew Long and Quinton Ezeagwula because they wore the uniform of the U.S. Army.

Additionally, in August 2013, Nidal Hasan was convicted on 13 counts of premeditated murder and 32 counts of attempted premeditated murder and was sentenced to death for the shooting at Fort Hood. Hasan recently sent a letter to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdad asking to become a member of the extremist Islamic group. Recent actions by ISIS, particularly the beheading for two American journalists, demonstrate the grotesque and violent nature of this terrorist organization. Hasan's letter requesting to join ISIS is the most recent example that his murderous rampage in 2009 was an act of terrorism.

Given that it has been more than 5 years since these attacks, we find it unacceptable that DoD has delayed this review for yet another year. Further, as you know, the current regulations for awarding a Purple Heart state that members of the Armed Forces who have been killed or wounded "after March 28, 1973, as a result of an international terrorist attack against the United States" shall be eligible for a Purple Heart. All of the men and women killed or wounded in these attacks were victims of terrorism, targeted because they were soldiers. They deserve this recognition for their service and their sacrifice.

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
September 4, 2014
Page 2 of 2

The delay in this report and DoD's insistence that these brave men and women do not deserve the honor of being awarded the Purple Heart has denied these service members and their families essential benefits that are provided to Purple Heart recipients. As members of the Armed Forces, we find this continued inaction by the DoD disgraceful, as well as unlawful, and we urge you to exercise your authority to complete this report and honor these men and women with the award they have earned.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Rick Crawford
Member of Congress



Tim Griffin
Member of Congress



Steve Womack
Member of Congress



Tom Cotton
Member of Congress