



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL
2200 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20310-2200

MAY 22 2013

MAY 16 2013

Honorable Thomas J. Rooney
The United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Rooney:

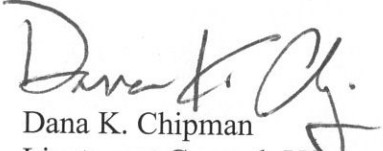
I have been asked to respond on behalf of Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to your May 6, 2013, letter regarding benefits for the victims of the Fort Hood Shootings. The Army and Department of Defense are committed to ensuring that the victims receive all the benefits they are entitled to under the law. The victims in this tragic incident are a mixture of Soldiers and Army civilian employees. The benefits available to each group and the criteria for each benefit differ. There has been no decision by the Army to classify this shooting as "workplace violence" and, so far as I am aware, no benefit has been denied to any of the victims based on any such classification.

At this point, the individuals wounded or killed in this tragic incident do not qualify for award of the Purple Heart because the award criteria have not been met. There is no factual basis or precedent that would support designating this event as combat. As the Secretary of the Army has previously indicated, the available evidence in this case does not, at this time, support a finding that the shooting at Fort Hood was an act of international terrorism. Rather, the evidence, thus far, indicates that this was the alleged criminal act of a single individual. Additionally, recognizing that such a determination may have a negative impact on the ongoing judicial proceedings, we are fully committed to our obligation to respect the judicial process and allow these cases to run their course fairly and free of any actual or perceived unlawful command influence. Please be assured that, based on new, relevant evidence, the Army is willing to reconsider this decision if it is warranted at a later time.

The Army's decision, in no way, diminishes the common goal of ensuring the victims are treated and cared for promptly and compassionately. Although we cannot undo the outcome of that day, taking care of those affected by the Fort Hood shooting, which includes the wounded, the Families of the wounded and the Fallen, as well as other members of our great Fort Hood military community, remains one of the Army's top priorities.

I am hopeful this letter addresses your concerns and again, we extend an invitation to work with you to resolve any specific concerns. Thank you for your continued support of our Soldiers, Veterans, and their Families.

Sincerely,


Dana K. Chipman
Lieutenant General, US Army
The Judge Advocate General