



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
WASHINGTON

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FEB 12 2008

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your January 29, 2008 letter concerning an allegation that the command at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, improperly endorsed a religious program known as Free Day Away for Initial Entry Training (IET) Soldiers. Your letter also referenced concerns raised by Mr. Jason Torpy about the treatment of atheist Soldiers in the Army and, more specifically, that atheist Soldiers in Iraq were being subjected to abusive treatment by Christian fundamentalist Soldiers.

Mr. Torpy previously filed a complaint with the Fort Leonard Wood Inspector General (IG) on August 15, 2006, raising his concerns about the Free Day Away program. The Fort Leonard Wood IG found that the program does not violate Army policy in that participation is voluntary and the command informs the Soldiers that religious services will be presented as part of the program. Additionally, the Office of the Chief of Chaplains reviewed the Army Chaplaincy policies as they apply to the Free Day Away program and found no deviation from Army policy or law. The Fort Leonard Wood IG determined that IET Soldiers have opportunities to participate in non-religious morale, welfare, and recreation programs, but that these activities vary from unit to unit. More specifically, during the Free Day Away program, IET Soldiers can remain in the barracks or go to an on-post facility, such as a Post Exchange Annex.

The additional allegations raised by Mr. Torpy that atheist Soldiers were abused and treated unfairly by Christian Soldiers while deployed to Iraq remain under investigation by the Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG). They have interviewed Mr. Torpy and are interviewing additional witnesses. We will provide the results to your office separately when we complete our investigation.

My research in response to your letter has persuaded me of the need to review both the religious and secular programs offered our Soldiers while they are in IET, to insure that the programs are offered, provided, and conducted in a manner that respects and protects the religious freedom of all Soldiers. I have directed the DAIG to conduct a comprehensive review of such programs across all Army Training Centers. We will provide the results to your office when we complete the review.

Thank you for your support of our Soldiers and their Families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Geren", is written over a horizontal line.

Pete Geren