

SAN JOSE, CA – Today, Representative Michael M. Honda (CA – 15) – with the support of Ms. Mary Tillman, mother of slain Army Ranger, Corporal Patrick Tillman – sent a letter to the Department of Defense (DoD) Acting Inspector General (IG), insisting on the immediate and thorough completion of the investigation into Corporal Tillman’s death. [Letter text below] Tillman, who gave up a successful professional football career to volunteer for combat duty in Afghanistan, fell in battle in 2004 under suspicious circumstances. Over the nearly two-and-a-half years since, multiple Army investigations into his death have been marked by missteps, misstatements and obfuscation.

“Justice deferred is justice denied,” Honda said upon issuing the letter, “and justice for Pat Tillman and his family has been inexcusably denied,” he continued, concluding, “Despite multiple flawed attempts by the Army to determine precisely how Pat was killed, and numerous postponements of DoD investigations into the Army’s mistakes, Corporal Tillman’s family is no nearer to closure than the day he died.”

In the letter to Acting DoD IG, Thomas F. Gimble, Honda wrote, “The legacy of a fallen warrior, resolution for family members on the home front, and the confidence of our heroic service members in their civilian and military superiors require, at long last, an immediate conclusion to the investigation...Whether intentional or unintentional, the Army’s missteps have exacerbated the pain and sorrow felt by the Tillman family over their loss.”

Text of Rep. Honda Letter to Department of Defense Acting Inspector General, Thomas F. Gimble:

September 19, 2006

Acting Honorable Thomas F. Gimble
Acting Inspector General
Department of Defense
400 Army Navy Drive, #1000
Arlington, VA 22202-4704

Dear Acting Inspector General Gimble:

With the support of Ms. Mary Tillman, mother of Army Corporal Patrick Tillman, I write to urge you to complete expeditiously your office’s investigation of the Army’s reports on the death of Corporal Tillman. The legacy of a fallen warrior, resolution for family members on the home front, and the confidence of our heroic service members in their civilian and military superiors require, at long last, an immediate conclusion to the investigation.

On April 22, 2004, Army Specialist Patrick Tillman was killed in Afghanistan. Original reports suggested that Tillman was killed by enemy fire. The Army posthumously promoted Tillman to Corporal and awarded him the Silver Star for his actions. Weeks later, Tillman's family was notified that his death was a possible fratricide, a conclusion confirmed in a 2005 report by Brigadier General Gary Jones. In fact, this report acknowledges what Tillman's fellow soldiers and higher ranking officials knew almost immediately: Corporal Tillman was killed by friendly fire.

Despite multiple investigations by the Army into Corporal Tillman's death, the Army has failed to appropriately account for the events of April 22, 2004, as well as the Army's subsequent misstatements to the family and media. Whether intentional or unintentional, the Army's missteps have exacerbated the pain and sorrow felt by the Tillman family over their loss.

In response to Tillman family and Congressional requests, your office initiated an investigation on August 9, 2005. Since then, the expected completion date of the investigation has been delayed numerous times. Most recently, your staff indicated that further complications would delay the investigation's completion until late November or early December of 2006.

While I strongly encourage your office to thoroughly investigate the matter, I also expect your office to complete the investigation expeditiously. It has been over two years since his death, and Corporal Tillman's loved ones and the nation deserve an accurate accounting of his death and of the Army's handling of the matter. Thank you for your continued work on this matter. I look forward to reviewing the results of your investigation.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress