



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DEC 7 - 2008

MEMORANDUM: FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Prohibited Alteration of DoD Imagery

Credible communication in today's challenging information environment requires that Department of Defense (DoD) media products be of high quality, accurate in their content, and truthful in the message they convey. Recent incidents of altering imagery released to the media have undermined the credibility of all DoD media products. Release of accurate and timely information to the public is a commander's responsibility and impacts military operations by helping the public and Congress understand defense strategy, defense policy, and national security issues. Authority to release may be delegated, but it is the commander's responsibility to ensure all members within their command are aware of the negative impact of releasing media products, such as altered photos which do not depict the truth.

This issue is not limited to the Public Affairs (PA) or Visual Information (VI) communities. The widespread use of digital cameras and image editing software allows any member to easily manipulate photos for what may seem to be harmless purposes, such as changing the rank of a recently promoted military member or digitally placing a flag behind an officer. However, such alterations can and do have wide-ranging negative consequences because they change the factual content captured by the camera and call into question the truthfulness of other DoD imagery.

Alteration of DoD imagery is strictly prohibited and is codified by DoD Instruction 5040.05 (Alteration of Official DoD Imagery). In short, anything that weakens or casts doubt on the credibility of official DoD imagery in or outside the Department of Defense is prohibited and should not be tolerated.

I ask all commanders and users of DoD imagery at every level to review and share this memo and the guidance in DoDI 5040.05, as well as establish processes and procedures consistent with this instruction. The instruction and examples of prohibited alterations can be found at: <http://dodimagery.afis.osd.mil/learning/vipolicy/dodi.html>. Further questions can be addressed to Mr. Steve Hahn at: Stephen.hahn@dma.mil.

Thank you for your support.

Robert T. Hastings
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
of Defense for Public Affairs



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