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Upgrading Your Discharge and Acquiring Your Military Records

The Department of Defense released clarifying guidance for discharges and military records reviews. In the past few years, the department has issued guidance for consideration of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) but there remained some questions about how the guidance applied to sexual assault, sexual harassment, or mental health conditions other than PTSD. This guidance fills in the gaps and resolves any confusion that veterans or the review boards may have had, and it ensures a fair and equitable review of separations for all veterans.

Veterans who desire a correction to their service record or who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous, or warrants an upgrade, are encouraged to apply for review. Click here for guidance: <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Clarifying-Guidance-to-Military-Discharge-Review-Boards.pdf>.

For discharge upgrades, if the discharge was less than 15 years ago, the veteran should complete DD Form 293 (<http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd0293.pdf>) and send it to their service's DRB (the address is on the form). If over 15 years ago, complete DD Form 149 (<http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd0149.pdf>) and then send it to their service's BCM/NR (the address is on the form).

For corrections of records other than discharges, veterans should complete the DD Form 149 and submit their request to their service's BCM/NR (the address is on the form).

Key information to include in requests:

In preparing an application for relief related to a mental health condition, PTSD, TBI, sexual assault or sexual harassment, the veteran should answer the four questions identified in the clarifying guidance released today. Additionally, the veteran should include or identify any supporting evidence. Examples of the types of evidence that may be helpful are included in the clarifying guidance. Lastly, it is helpful, but not always required, to submit copies of the veteran's applicable service records. The more information provided, the better the boards can understand the circumstances of the discharge.

Personnel records for veterans who served after 1997 should be accessible online and are usually retrievable within hours of a request through the Defense Personnel Records Information Retrieval System (DPRIS). To obtain one's personnel records from DPRIS, go to <https://www.dpris.dod.mil/>, then select "Individual Veteran Access" on the left side of the

Website and follow the instructions. Veterans will need to register for a log-on and verify their current mailing address before requesting records. The whole process usually takes less than 10 minutes. Those who served prior to 1997 or for whom electronic records are not available from DPRIS, can request their records from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) using the eVetRecs website at: <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>.

For other information or assistance:

Air Force BCMR

Website: <http://www.afpc.af.mil/board-for-correction-of-military-records>

Phone: 240-612-5379

E-mail: usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrbc@mail.mil

Air Force DRB:

Website: <http://www.afpc.af.mil/Air-Force-Discharge-Review-Board/>

Phone: 240-612-0995

E-mail: usaf.pentagon.saf-mr.mbx.saf-mrb@mail.mil

Army BCMR:

Website: <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/>

E-mail: army.arbainquiry@mail.mil

Army DRB: Website: <http://arba.army.pentagon.mil/>

E-mail: army.arbainquiry@mail.mil

Navy BCNR:

Website: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/bcnr/Pages/home.aspx>

Phone: 703-607-6111

E-mail: BCNR_Application@navy.mil

Navy DRB:

Website: <http://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/CORB/Pages/NDRB/default.aspx>

Phone: 202-685-6600

E-mail: NDRB@navy.mil