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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

ADDENDUM TO RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2010-04427-2

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COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING REQUESTED: NO

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

The Board reconsider her request to change her "Uncharacterized" entry level separation (ELS) to honorable.

RESUME OF THE CASE

The applicant is a former Air Force airman (E-2) who was discharged on 12 Jun 03 after serving one month of active duty for failed medical/physical procurement standards.

On 12 Jul 11, the Board considered and denied her request for a change to her ELS separation; finding the applicant had provided insufficient evidence of an error or injustice to justify relief. The Board agreed with the rationale and recommendation of HQ AETC/SG and HQ AFPC/DPSOS who found no error with the discharge process; the discharge was consistent with the procedural and substantive requirements of the discharge regulation and was within the discretion of the discharge authority.

For an accounting of the applicant's original request and the rationale of the earlier decision, see the AFBCMR Letter and Record of Proceedings at Exhibit F.

On 30 Mar 24, the applicant requested reconsideration of her request for her "Uncharacterized" ELS to honorable. She again contends she passed her physical at the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) and was not aware of any medical condition of asthma prior to enlistment.

In support of his reconsideration request, the applicant submitted the following new evidence: (1) enlistment and discharge documents; (2) her medical history and examination; and (3) her medical records from Basic Military Training (BMT).

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit G.

APPLICABLE AUTHORITY/GUIDANCE

AFBCMR Docket Number BC-2010-04427-2

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Controlled by: SAF/MRB
CUI Categories: *Work-Product*
Limited Dissemination Control: N/A
POC: SAF.MRBC.Workflow@us.af.mil

AFI 36-3208, *Administrative Separation of Airmen*, dated 28 May 03, describes the authorized service characterizations that were applicable at the time of the applicant's separation.

Honorable. The quality of the airman's service generally has met Air Force standards of acceptable conduct and performance of duty or when a member's service is otherwise so meritorious that any other characterization would be inappropriate.

Entry Level Separation. Airmen are in entry level status during the first 180 days of continuous active military service or the first 180 days of continuous active military service after a break of more than 92 days of active service. Determine the member's status by the date of notification; thus, if the member is in entry level status when initiating the separation action, describe it as an entry level separation unless:

- A service characterization of under other than honorable conditions is authorized under the reason for discharge and is warranted by the circumstances of the case; or
- The Secretary of the Air Force determines, on a case-by-case basis, that characterization as honorable is clearly warranted by unusual circumstances of personal conduct and performance of military duty.

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

The AFBCMR Medical Advisor recommends denying the application finding insufficient evidence to support the applicant's request to change any component in her discharge documents. The known medical association of one's predisposition of asthma-like symptoms in relation to existing allergies lent a significant amount of probative value and thus the determination of her EPTS condition. The overall separation process was in accordance with regulatory guidance. It appeared the applicant was not a victim of an error or injustice in her discharge processing. The burden of proof is placed on the applicant to submit evidence to support her request.

An ELS, otherwise known as an uncharacterized discharge, is given to individuals who separate prior to completing 180 days of military service, or when discharge action was initiated prior to 180 days of service. This type of discharge does not attempt to characterize service as good or bad, but simply denotes the service member's short time in uniform. This brief time constraint reflects an inadequate period to appropriately and fairly judge an individual's work characteristics because in the first few months of service, a new enlistee's duties revolve around training; both BMT and technical school, prior to performing their specialized work. In this case, the applicant with 30 days of active-duty service was well below the 180-day benchmark and thus an uncharacterized/ELS was appropriate.

In addition, the applicant is advised the current designation of "Failed Medical Procurement Standards" on her DD Form 214, does not imply that she knowingly or fraudulently entered military service. Although the applicant was without acute physical symptoms at the time of her enlistment physical examination, the identification of her having a history of dust allergy coincides with the well-known and established nexus within the medical community of association of the

two conditions (allergy and asthma). According to the Mayo Clinic, allergies and asthma often occur together with very similar symptoms. The same substances that may trigger one's hay fever-type allergic symptoms, such as pollen, dust, dust mites, and or pet dander, may also cause asthma signs and symptoms given the proper environment and or physical activities. An allergic response occurs when immune system proteins (antibodies) mistakenly identify a harmless substance, such as dust or pollen (allergen), as a foreign invader and to protect our body from such substances, antibodies bind to or capture the allergen. Chemicals released by such an immune reaction (or capture) leads to allergy signs and symptoms which under the right conditions can also adversely affect the lungs and airways, leading to asthma symptoms and diagnosis. Though allergic asthma is very common, there are other types of asthma with different kinds of triggers. For some individuals, asthma can be triggered by exercise, infections, cold air, or even stress. Many individuals have more than one kind of asthma trigger. In this case, the applicant's allergy to dust highly predisposed her to an exacerbation of asthma symptoms when exposed to various triggers such as the environment in BMT which included exercise, temperature variation, and stress. When the asthma triggering components are identified and removed, the asthma symptoms would decrease and often be completely relieved until the next triggering event takes place. This association of exposure to an allergen causing asthma-type symptoms and such symptoms are relieved when the allergen is removed or stopped is well established in the medical community. Therefore, any BMT exposure did not permanently aggravate her asthma condition beyond the natural progression of the condition, but rather she experienced an acute exacerbation (temporary) of her pre-disposed underlying asthma condition. Such conditions commonly result in a service discharge due to "Failed Medical/Procurement Standards" or as an "Erroneous Medical Entry." A service member may be administratively discharged, even though related to a medical condition, when in the case of a service member it has been determined a disqualifying medical condition EPTS and has not been permanently aggravated by military service. The applicant was medically evaluated in suspicion for a respiratory condition within the first two weeks of BMT and the consideration of the condition being permanently aggravated above the natural (long-term) progression of this condition is not a medically plausible conclusion. Although not found upon enlistment, the applicant would not/did not meet minimum standards for enlistment. This medical advisor has not seen evidence to refute the decision to administratively separate the applicant in 2003.

The complete advisory opinion is at Exhibit H.

APPLICANT'S REVIEW OF AIR FORCE EVALUATION

The Board sent a copy of the advisory opinion to the applicant on 8 Jan 25 for comment (Exhibit I) but has received no response.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. The application was timely filed.
2. The applicant exhausted all available non-judicial relief before applying to the Board.

3. After reviewing all Exhibits, the Board remains unconvinced the evidence presented demonstrates an error or injustice. Airmen are given entry level separation with uncharacterized service when they fail to complete a minimum of 180 days of continuous active military service and the applicant only served 30 days of active service; therefore, the type of separation and character of service are correct as indicated on her DD Form 214. Additionally, the Board concurs with the rationale and recommendation of the AFBCMR Medical Advisor and finds a preponderance of the evidence does not substantiate the applicant's contentions. The Board noted the applicant's contention she was medically cleared by MEPS for enlistment in the service; however, the Board finds her asthma condition EPTS and was not permanently service aggravated beyond the natural progression of the condition, which manifested during BMT as a pre-disposed underlying condition. Her allergy to dust temporarily exacerbated her asthma; and therefore, the Board finds she was properly evaluated and discharged with an ELS. Hence, the Board recommends against correcting the applicant's records.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board recommends informing the applicant the evidence did not demonstrate material error or injustice, and the Board will reconsider the application only upon receipt of relevant evidence not already presented.

CERTIFICATION

The following quorum of the Board, as defined in Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*, paragraph 2.1, considered Docket Number BC-2010-04427-2 in Executive Session on 19 Feb 25:

Work-Product Panel Chair
Work-Product, Panel Member
Work-Product Panel Member

All members voted against correcting the record. The panel considered the following:

- Exhibit F: Record of Proceedings, w/ Exhibits A-J, dated 12 Jul 11.
- Exhibit G: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, dated 30 Mar 24.
- Exhibit H: Advisory Opinion, AFBCMR Medical Advisor, dated 6 Jan 25.
- Exhibit I: Notification of Advisory, SAF/MRBC to Applicant, dated 8 Jan 25.

Taken together with all Exhibits, this document constitutes the true and complete Record of Proceedings, as required by DAFI 36-2603, paragraph 4.12.9.

2/25/2025

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Board Operations Manager, AFBCMR
Signed by: USAF