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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

Work-Product

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2021-00402

COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING REQUESTED: NO

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

His DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, dated 30 Nov 02, be corrected to reflect the following awards:

- a. Air Force Combat Action Medal.
- b. Afghanistan Campaign Medal.
- c. Korea Defense Service Medal. **(Will be administratively corrected)**
- d. Gallant Unit Citation. **(Will be administratively corrected)**

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

He was a sensor operator and flew combat missions over Afghanistan in 2002, qualifying for the Air Force Combat Action Medal and Afghanistan Campaign Medal. In addition, he completed an overseas short tour in Korea for entitlement of the Korea Defense Service Medal, and was assigned to a special operations squadron awarded the Gallant Unit Citation for the period he was assigned. He was recently made aware of these awards as they were implemented after he retired in 2002.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is a retired Air Force technical sergeant (E-6).

According to the *Individual Flight Record Report*, dated 1 Aug 02, provided by the applicant, the applicant participated in 14 combat sorties as an aircraft sensor operator.

On 30 Nov 02, according to DD Form 214, the applicant was released from active duty for the purpose of retirement and credited with 20 years, 3 months, and 14 days of active service and 2 years of Foreign Service. Item 13, *Decorations, Medals, Badges, Citations and Campaign Ribbons Awarded or Authorized*, reflects: Aerial Achievement Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Achievement Medal, Joint Unit Citation with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Outstanding Unit Award with Valor and Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, Combat Readiness Medal, Good Conduct Medal with one Silver Oak Leaf Cluster, National Defense Service Medal with one Bronze Star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal with one Bronze Star, Armed Force Service Medal, Air Force Overseas

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Controlled by: SAF/MRB

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Limited Dissemination Control: N/A

POC: SAF.MRBC.Workflow@us.af.mil

Short Tour Ribbon, Longevity Service Award with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Military Education Ribbon with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon with one Bronze Star, Air Force Training Ribbon, and NATO Medal.

On 16 Sep 22, AFPC/DP1SSP verified entitlement and directed the applicant's DD Form 214 be corrected to include the Korea Defense Service Medal and Gallant Unit Citation.

For more information, see the excerpt of the applicant's record at Exhibit B and the advisory at Exhibit C.

APPLICABLE AUTHORITY

Department of the Air Force Manual (DAFMAN) 36-2806, *Military Awards: Criteria and Procedures*. The Combat Action Medal was established by the Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) to recognize members of the DAF (grades E-1 through O-6) who actively participated in ground or air combat. On 16 Nov 20, SecAF approved the renaming of the Air Force Combat Action Medal to the Combat Action Medal. Nomination for the medal is restricted to members of the United States Armed Forces who on or after 11 Sep 01: Deliberately go into the enemy's domain (outside the wire) to conduct official duties, either on the ground or in the air, and have come under enemy fire by lethal weapons while performing those duties, and are at risk of grave danger; or air combat where the member must have been flying as an authorized aircrew member on aeronautical orders in direct support of a combat zone and in combat. Combat must take place in a combat zone defined as a geographic area designated by the President of the United States by Executive Order, or a qualified hazardous duty area in which a member is receiving imminent danger pay or hostile fire pay. The member must be physically present, at risk of grave danger, and performing in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement. Offensive air operations may qualify if they are engaging hostile forces with direct and lethal fire. Taking fire from the enemy is not a prerequisite if the member was physically present and the risk of grave danger was imminent. Only one medal is authorized for a qualifying war or conflict. The qualifying war or conflict and qualifying period of service is the War on Terrorism from 11 Sep 01 to a date to be determined. Approval authority is the Secretary of the Air Force Decorations Board.

Requests for the medal are endorsed by the member's commander to the first O-6 in the operational chain to the approving official. The request must be submitted on AF Form 3994, *Recommendation for Decoration Deployment/Contingency Operations*, and include a narrative justification and eyewitness statements (two or more statements containing date, time, location, event description, other members present, etc.) from a person with first-hand knowledge of the incident. If necessary, a narrative detailing the event, possibly attained by coordination with a senior leader who was in a position to know of the event, and endorsed by no less than the member's current wing or delta commander attesting to the veracity of the content, will suffice. The narrative justification must contain details on how the member was in grave danger (e.g., enemy action, fragmentation zone, type of enemy fire, blast radius, mounted/dismounted, proximity to weapons fire, where rounds impacted, damage to equipment or vehicles, injuries sustained by the occupants in the vehicle or surrounding area, etc.). In a ground event, state size of team, patrol or convoy, where the member was located in the team, patrol or convoy, and the member's duties. Additional documents that may be submitted are contingency exercise deployment orders, finalized travel vouchers, personal military decorations, letters of evaluation, sketches, maps, diagrams, and photographs.

The Afghanistan Campaign Medal was established by Public Law 108-234, dated 28 May 04, and Executive Order 13363, dated 29 Nov 04, to recognize service members who serve or have served in the country of Afghanistan in support of the War on Terrorism operations. The period of eligibility is 11 Sep 01 to 31 Aug 21, and the area of eligibility encompasses all land and air space

of the country of Afghanistan. The medal is awarded to members who, during the period of the award, were permanently assigned, attached, or detailed for 30 consecutive days or 60 non-consecutive days to a unit operating in the area of eligibility or who, regardless of time spent in the area of eligibility, were engaged in combat during an armed engagement. Aircrew members accrue one day of eligibility for each day they fly into, out of, within, or over the area of eligibility.

Eligibility criteria for awards and decorations may be found in DAFMAN 36-2806 available at: https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/dafman36-2806/dafman36-2806.pdf or at: <https://www.afpc.af.mil/Career-Management/Decorations-and-Ribbons/>.

Requests for awards and decorations may be considered by the AFPC Recognitions Office using one of the following options:

Email: AFPC.DPSTTC.recognitionprocess@us.af.mil

Mail: AFPC Recognitions
AFPC/DPSTTC
550 C St W
JBSA Randolph AFB, TX 78150

FAX: 210-565-0703

Certain decorations require members to submit their request under the provisions of DAFMAN 36-2806, Section 2B, *Time Limitation*, and 10 U.S.C. § 1130, *Considerations of proposals for decorations not previously submitted in timely fashion: procedures for review*. The procedures under 10 U.S.C. § 1130 are listed in DAFMAN 36-2806, paragraph 2.13.2. and Table 2.1. *Recommendation Checklist*.

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

AFPC/DP3SP (Recognition Program) recommends denying award of the Combat Action Medal and Afghanistan Campaign Medal. After a thorough review of the applicant's official military personnel record and provided documentation, they were unable to verify that the applicant meets established criteria for award of the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Further, they were unable to verify eligibility of the Combat Action Medal as the applicant did not provide the recommendation for the award along with the required supporting documentation. Notwithstanding the above, they were able to verify award of the Korea Defense Service Medal and Gallant Unit Award. Accordingly, the applicant's record will be administratively corrected.

The complete advisory opinion is at Exhibit C.

APPLICANT'S REVIEW OF AIR FORCE EVALUATION

The Board sent a copy of the advisory opinion to the applicant on 3 Apr 23 for comment (Exhibit D), and the applicant replied on 24 May 23 and provided a copy of AFSOC Form 41, *Flight Authorization*, dated 2 Apr 02. The applicant's complete response is at Exhibit E.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. The application was not timely filed. The Board notes the applicant did not file the application within three years of discovering the alleged error or injustice, as required by Section 1552 of Title 10, United States Code, and Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 36-2603, *Air Force*

Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR). While the applicant asserts a date of discovery within the three-year limit, the Board does not find the assertion supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

2. The applicant exhausted all available non-judicial relief before applying to the Board.

3. After reviewing all Exhibits, the Board concludes the applicant is not the victim of an error or injustice. The Board concurs with the rationale and recommendation of AFPC/DP3SP and finds a preponderance of the evidence does not substantiate the applicant's contentions. According to DAFMAN 36-2806, requests for the Combat Action Medal must be submitted on AF Form 3994, to the approval authority. Submissions must be endorsed by the member's chain of command and include narrative justification and statements from eyewitnesses with first-hand knowledge of the incident. The applicant failed to provide evidence he submitted his request in the proper format through the appropriate channels. In addition, while he provided various flight records, he failed to provide clear evidence he served in the area of eligibility for the required duration, or that he engaged in combat in an armed engagement in the area of eligibility for award of the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Therefore, 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 DAFI 36-2603, paragraph 2.1, considered Docket Number BC-2021-00402 in Executive Session on 16 Nov 23:

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 A: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, dated 12 Nov 20.
- Exhibit B: Documentary evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.
- Exhibit C: Advisory Opinion, AFPC/DP3SP, dated 27 Dec 22.
- Exhibit D: Notification of Advisory, SAF/MRBC to Applicant, dated 3 Apr 23.
- Exhibit E: Applicant's Response, dated 24 May 23.

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.

8/19/2025

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Board Operations Manager, AFBCMR
Signed by: USAF

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