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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2021-01263

Work-Product

COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING REQUESTED: NO

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

His DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge From Active Duty*, Item 13, *Decorations, Medals, Badges, Commendations, Citations and Campaign Ribbons Awarded or Authorized* be corrected to reflect award of the following:

1. Afghanistan Campaign Medal.
2. Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (GWOTEM).
3. Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon.
4. Air Force Combat Action Medal (AFCAM).

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

He separated in 2004 and the medals should have been awarded; he participated in two deployments for ENDURING FREEDOM.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is a former Air Force senior airman (E-4) who entered the Regular Air Force on 22 Aug 00.

On 21 Aug 04, according to his DD Form 214, the applicant was released from the Regular Air Force and transferred to the Air Force Reserve (AFR). He was credited with four years of active service. Item 13 reflects the following awards: the Aerial Achievement Medal, Air Medal with two devices, Air Force Achievement Medal, Air Force Training Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor with five devices.

Dated 27 May 08, according to Reserve Order Work-Product, the applicant was honorably discharged from the AFR, effective 21 May 08.

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

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

AFPC/DP3SP recommends denying the award of the AFCAM, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, GWOTEM, and Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon. Specifically, the required documentation or a recommendation for award of the AFCAM was not provide by the applicant and documentation the applicant was awarded the medal during service was unable to be verified in their military record. AFPC/DP3SP was unable to verify the applicant was in support of a GWOTEM authorized operation. Additionally, AFPC/DP3SP was unable to determine the applicant served in the country of Afghanistan in support of the War on Terrorism to meet eligibility criteria for the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Lastly, AFPC/DP3SP was unable to verify the applicant was engaged in combat operations for 45 consecutive days or 90 nonconsecutive days in a deployed status; rendering him ineligible for award of the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border.

Per Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 36-2806, *Military Awards: Criteria and Procedures*, section A14.17, the AFCAM was established on 15 Mar 07 by the Secretary of the Air Force to recognize members of the Air Force (airman basic through colonel) who actively participated in ground or air combat. Nomination for the medal is restricted to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who on or after 11 Sep 01 deliberately went 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 while defending the base (inside/on the wire) and came under fire and engaged the enemy with direct and lethal fire, and were at the risk of grave danger.

Per section 5.3.1, members who meet the approved criteria must provide proper documentation to their commander, who will review and recommend approval. The required documentation must be accomplished on the AF Form 3994, *Recommendation for Decoration Deployment/Contingency Operations*, to include as a minimum: a narrative explanation of the circumstances (date, time, location, event description, other members present, etc.), submitted by a person with first-hand knowledge of the incident through the commander to the first colonel in the operational chain who will then submit to the approving official (i.e., COMAFFOR). 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 commander attesting to the veracity of the content, will suffice.

Per section 5.3.1.6, the narrative 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 (e.g., vehicle 3 of 29) and what the member's duties were. Additional supporting documentation, such

as contingency, exercise and deployment orders, finalized travel vouchers, decorations, or letters of evaluation; and sketches, maps, diagrams, and photographs which support the award, may also be submitted with the narrative.

Per section 14.7, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal was established 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 beginning 11 Sep 01 to a future date to be determined, 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 meets one of the following criteria, regardless of time spent in the area of eligibility: (1) Were engaged in combat during an armed engagement, or (2) While participating in an operation or on official duties were killed, or were wounded or injured and medically evacuated from the area of eligibility. Aircrew members accrue one day of eligibility for each day they fly into, out of, within, or over the area of eligibility.

Members who received the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal by reasons of service between 11 Sep 01 and 30 Apr 05, in an area for which the Afghanistan Campaign Medal was subsequently authorized, remain eligible for the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal or may exchange the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal for the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Under no condition will personnel or units receive the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, or the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal for the same action, time, or period of service. Airmen who forward deploy to units within the area of eligibility may be considered for additional campaign awards on a case-by-case basis providing the member meets the minimum award criteria.

Per section 14.10, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal was established to recognize members of the United States Armed Forces who deployed abroad for service in the War on Terrorism operations on or after 11 Sep 01 to a date to be determined. To be eligible, members must have been permanently assigned, attached, or detailed to a unit that participated, on or after 11 Sep 01 in a designated Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal operation in the specified area of eligibility for that operation for 30 consecutive or 60 nonconsecutive days, or meet one of the following criteria, regardless of time spent in the area of eligibility: (1) Were engaged in actual combat against the enemy and under circumstances involving grave danger of death or serious bodily injury from enemy action, or (2) While participating in the designated operation were killed, or were wounded or injured and medically evacuated from the area of eligibility. Members participating as a regularly assigned aircrew member flying sorties into, out of, within, or over the area of eligibility in direct support of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal designated operation are eligible for the medal. Each day that one or more sorties are flown in accordance with these criteria counts as 1 day toward the 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive day requirement. Members must have deployed abroad for a designated Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal approved operation to a designated area of eligibility for that operation.

Per section, A14.26. the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon was established on 18 Jun 03 to recognize air expeditionary force deployed status. In Apr 04, the gold border was authorized to

be affixed to the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon to represent participation in combat operations. The ribbon is awarded to regular Air Force, Air National Guard and AFR members credited with completion of a contingency deployment after 1 Oct 99. Deployment credit is defined as either 45 consecutive days or 90 nonconsecutive days in deployed status. The ribbon with a gold border is awarded to members who met the criteria for the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon (Basic) and were engaged in conducting or supporting combat operations in a combat zone. A combat zone is defined as a geographic area designated by the President via an executive order, or a qualified hazardous duty area in which a member is receiving imminent danger or hostile fire pay. For award of the gold border, members were assigned to an air expeditionary force plan identification or on contingency, exercise, deployment orders and in receipt of imminent danger pay or hostile fire pay, during the qualifying period of service. Aircrew members who engage in combat action were assigned on aeronautical orders in direct support of a combat zone. Combat action is defined as when a member is subject to hostile fire, explosion or is engaged in employing lethal weapons (kinetic or non-kinetic).

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 25 Apr 23 for comment (Exhibit D), but has received no response.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. The application was not timely filed. 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 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*. The Board does not find it in the interest of justice to waive the three-year filing requirement.
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. Specifically, the required documentation or a recommendation for award of the AFCAM was not provide by the applicant and documentation the applicant was awarded the medal during service was unable to be verified in their military record. Furthermore, the Board was unable to verify the applicant was in support of a GWOTEM authorized operation and was unable to determine if the applicant served in the country of Afghanistan in support of the War on Terrorism to meet eligibility criteria for the Afghanistan Campaign Medal. Lastly, the Board was unable to verify the applicant was engaged in combat operations for 45 consecutive days or 90 nonconsecutive days in a deployed status, therefore rendering him ineligible for award of the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border. Therefore, the Board recommends against correcting the applicant's records.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board recommends informing the applicant the application was not timely filed; it would not be in the interest of justice to excuse the delay; 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-2021-01263 in Executive Session on 5 Dec 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, dated 12 Jan 21.

Exhibit B: Documentary evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.

Exhibit C: Advisory Opinion, AFPC/DP3SP, dated 29 Dec 22.

Exhibit D: Notification of Advisory, SAF/MRBC to Applicant, dated 25 Apr 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.

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6/8/2025

Board Operations Manager, AFBCMR

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