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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2022-02930

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COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING REQUESTED: NO

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

1. The "Given Under My Hand Date" (GUMHD) on his Aerial Achievement Medal (AAM) be backdated from 19 Oct 21 to reflect 1 Feb 21.
2. He be considered by a special selection board (SSB) for the CY21B P0521B Lieutenant Colonel (O-5) Line of the Air Force (LAF) Central Selection Board (CSB) with the corrected decoration.

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

He met the CY21B P0521B Lieutenant Colonel promotion board on 8 Mar 20; however, due to circumstances beyond his control, his record was missing an AAM earned six months prior to the board date. He goes onto reference, AFMAN 36-2806, *Awards and Memorialization Program*, which states "recommendations [for award] should be submitted as soon as possible following the act, achievement or service." In this regard, his AAM was earned through combat flights between 19 Jun 19 and 14 Oct 20, but was not posted to his record until 19 Oct 21, a full year after the final qualifying sortie. While the original AAM citation was created in Nov 2020, mismanagement at the squadron, group, and wing level resulted in several resubmissions, with the final accepted submission being signed by his squadron commander on 28 Sept 21. The coordination difficulties were out of his control and given the relatively simple nature of the medal, he believes that a year delay is an unreasonable amount of time for administrative processing.

When made aware of the situation the commander of the Work-Product Reconnaissance Squadron agreed to back-date the award and attempted to do so; however, Air Force Central Command (AFCENT) replied that they could not do so since the AFCENT FM 3994, *Recommendation for Decoration Deployment/Contingency Operations*, was signed on 28 Sept 21.

In support of his appeal, the applicant provides several documents, but of note is a letter dated 2 Nov 22 from his commander and signing authority for the decoration. The commander indicates that the Commander's Action Group (CAG) established a new process to coordinate decorations processing and the applicant's decoration was part of the first group of individuals submitted. Unfortunately, the coordination process fell behind timeline and the applicant's decoration package was not submitted until Sept 2021, a year after his last qualifying sortie flight was accomplished. While they attempted to backdate the medal, Air Combat Command (ACC) informed them that they did not have the ability to change. Because of this delay, which was out of his control, the medal did not meet the Mar 2021 promotion Board.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

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STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is a Regular Air Force major (O-4).

On 8 Mar 21, the CY21B Lieutenant Colonel LAF CSB (P0521B) convened.

On 19 Oct 21, as recorded by the GUMHD, the applicant was awarded the AAM for sustained aerial flights from 19 Jun 19 to 14 Oct 20.

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

APPLICABLE AUTHORITY/GUIDANCE

Background: Historically the "Given Under My Hand Date" is the date the approving official signed the approved decoration, thus making it a matter of record. While AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Program*, dated 18 Dec 13, with incorporated changes dated 8 Feb 18, is absent information regarding a "Given Under My Hand Date"; however, DAFMAN 36-2806, *Military Awards: Criteria and Procedure*, dated 27 Oct 22, which replaced AFI 36-2803 states in Attachment 4, *Preparation and Distribution of Certificates, Citations and Special Orders*, Paragraph A4.2.2. that, **"the 'Given Under My Hand' date on the certificate is the date the award was approved."** In this case the "Given Under My Hand" date was not signed until, 24 Jan 22 (AFAM) and 7 Mar 22 (AFCM), after the date the Board convened on 30 Nov 21 and therefore was not considered by the Board. However, the applicant's argument is that the inclusive period of the award (or the act and achievement) was prior to the date the Board convened and should now be considered material information that was not previously considered and as such warrants an SSB.

AFPC/DP3SP (Recognitions) and AFPC/DP2SSP (Officer Promotions), have recently changed their stance on correcting the "Given Under my Hand Date." In the past, cases have been closed for "Failure to Exhaust Remedies" and applicants were told that they must first request an amendment to the "Given Under My Hand Date" from the approval authority, who may approve or deny based on the circumstances. However, after further review of the regulation, AFPC has now advised that the "Given Under My Hand Date" is unamendable by the approval authority. In addition via e-mail dated, 16 Mar 20, titled "Policy guidance needed for Decorations – "Given Under My Hand Date," Headquarters Air Force A1 confirmed that the "Given Under My Hand Date" is the date that the commander approves the decoration, which is also the same for all Sister Services, Joint Staff and DoD. As such, AFBCMR is the only option that the applicant has is to request a change to the "Given Under My Hand Date."

Regulation Guidance:

AFI 36-2803, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Program*, dated 18 Dec 13, incorporating changes 8 Feb 18

2.2.2. Submit decoration recommendations in a timely manner. Should the member be nonrecommended for a decoration, the DECOR6 should be signed and returned to the commander no later than 10 duty days prior to MPS or other established suspense. Should the member be recommended for a decoration, complete a decoration recommendation as soon as possible following the act or achievement; or before the period of service. Due to statutory time limitations,

each recommendation for a decoration (except for the PH) must be placed into official channels within 2 years of the date of the act or achievement, or last day of the period of service, and final action (approval/disapproval, upgrade/downgrade) must be done within 3 years of the act, achievement, or service performed. However, to meet the objective of prompt recognition (“Pin ‘Em Where You Win ‘Em” philosophy), supervisors must not delay in submitting a decoration to the point of 2 years from the act, achievement, or service, since this may impact other critical personnel matters. (T-3).

AFMAN 36-2806, *The Air Force Military Awards and Decorations Program*, dated 10 June 2019,

A3.31.2: Recommendations are formally entered into official military channels within 3 years and awarded within 5 years of the termination date of the act, achievement, or service performed.

A4.3.2. It is highly recommended units support the Air Force “Pin ‘Em Where You Win ‘Em” practice which promotes timely approval and presentation of decorations to members prior to departing the organization, unless the member specifically requests otherwise.

DAFMAN 36-2806, *Military Awards: Criteria and Procedure*, dated 27 Oct 22

2.26.1. It is highly recommended units support the “Pin ‘Em Where You Win ‘Em” practice which promotes timely approval and presentation to members prior to departing the organization, unless the member specifically requests otherwise.

3.2.2. Recommendations are formally entered into official military channels within 3 years and awarded within 5 years of the termination date of the act, achievement, or service performed. (T-0). However, it is DAF’s goal that nominations for valor decorations be initiated within 90 days of the act justifying the award.

A4.8. Correcting a Decoration. Approval authorities may correct a certificate, citation, special order, or combined certificate and special order when discrepancies are identified and/or when special order amendments change information on the elements. For example, if a special order amendment changes the inclusive dates of a decoration, the approval authority who approved the decoration may correct certificate and citation to match the changes.

A4.2.2. The “Given Under My Hand” date on the certificate is the date the award was approved. This will not be a future date.

According to AFI 36-2501, *Officer Promotions and Selective Continuation*, Chapter 6, *Special Selection Boards*

6.3.2. Pursuant to Formal Appeal. The AFBCMR can grant SSBs when they determine an officer's nonselection for promotion resulted because of an error or injustice in the officer's record.

6.5.2. Consider the records of officers as they would have appeared to the original board had the officers been properly considered. Compare the officers' records with benchmark records from the original boards (paragraph 3.3.3).

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

AFPC/DPMSSP recommends denying the application. In accordance with the Department of the Air Force Evaluations and Recognition Programs policy, the "Given Under My Hand" date reflected upon a member's decoration is the official date of Commander approval and this date may not be administratively changed. Although the award period of the medal is 19 Jun 19 through 14 Oct 20, a date prior to the P0521B promotion board convening date of 08 Mar 21, the GUMHD, also the award date, was not until 19 Oct 21. On account of this, the applicant's decoration was not eligible for consideration within the P0521B board.

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 9 May 23 for comment (Exhibit D), 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 concludes the applicant is the victim of an error or injustice. While the Board notes the recommendation of AFPC/DPMSSP against correcting the record, the Board finds a preponderance of the evidence substantiates the applicant's contentions. In this regard, the Board notes the letter from the applicant's commander who confirms that the approval of his AAM was delayed due to a new coordination process that fell behind timeline. Given the inclusive dates were for periods of award prior to the date the CY21B Lieutenant Colonel LAF CSB convened, the administrative delay that was no fault of the applicant's, and the approval authority's concurrence, the Board finds sufficient evidence to approve the backdated GUMHD and provide the applicant SSB consideration based on the corrected decoration. Therefore, the Board recommends correcting the applicant's records as indicated below.

RECOMMENDATION

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to APPLICANT be corrected to show:

- a. The Given Under My Hand Date on all Air Force records of his Aerial Achievement Medal for the period of performance 19 June 2019 to 14 October 2020, be changed to 1 February 2021, rather than 19 October 2021.
- b. He be granted Special Selection Board (SSB) consideration by the P0521B Lieutenant Colonel Central Selection Board (CSB) with inclusion of the corrected Air Force record copy of the medal.

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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-2022-02930 in Executive Session on 15 Aug 23:

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Panel Chair

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Panel Member

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Panel Member

All members voted to correct the record. The panel considered the following:

Exhibit A: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, dated 2 Nov 22.

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

Exhibit C: Advisory Opinion, AFPC/DPMSPP, dated 5 May 23.

Exhibit D: Notification of Advisory, SAF/MRBC to Applicant, dated 9 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.

7/7/2025

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Signed by: USAF

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