

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2024-00040

XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

COUNSEL: XXXXXXXXXX

HEARING REQUESTED: NO

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

He receives a \$10K prior service incentive enlistment bonus for Fiscal Year 2023 in the Air Force Reserve (AFR).

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

He receive the bonus associated with his Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) of 2T371 for his enlistment in the AFR. His In-Service Recruiter told him that he was eligible for the \$10K bonus if he remained within his career field and enlisted for three years. He further states the promise of this \$10K bonus significantly influenced his decision to continue to serve.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is an AFR staff sergeant (E-5).

On 15 May 23, AF IMT 1288, *Application for Ready Reserve Assignment*, signed by both the applicant and recruiter, reflects the applicant applied for a PALACE FRONT transfer. The form shows the In-Service Recruiter signed on 17 May 23 and included the following remarks, "... the applicant shall receive a lump sum payment of \$10K/\$5K within 3-6 months after in-processing at my assigned reserve unit and approval actions of my bonus application with my Wing Talent Manager Consultant (WTMC), ARPC/DPA and processed by local Reserve Pay Office (RPO)."

On 30 Jun 23, according to DD Form 214, *Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, the applicant was honorably discharged after completing a period of active-duty service from 1 Mar 16 – 30 Jun 23 and was credited with seven years and four months of active service.

On 1 Jul 23, according to DD Form 4, *Enlistment/Reenlistment Document – Armed Forces of the United States*, the applicant enlisted in the AFR for a period of three years in the pay grade of staff sergeant (E-5) which were to be served in the Reserve component.

On 22 Nov 23, according to AF IMT 4021, *Application for Incentive Participation*, provided by the applicant, reflects he requested an Affiliation Incentive.

On 8 Jan 24, according to email traffic, the applicant's WTMC provided the bonus' Statement of Understanding for the applicant to sign. On that same date, the applicant provided an email response and attached the signed *10K/\$5K FY23 Non-Critical Skill AFSC Affiliation Agreement*.

On 5 Feb 24, according to the SAF/MRBC memorandum, the applicant was informed his case was being administratively closed as his request has been rectified at the unit level.

On 19 Apr 24, according to email traffic, provided by applicant, WTMC informed the applicant his bonus has been disapproved and that he was considered eligible for a prior service bonus of \$7.5K. It further notes, per message from HQ ARPC/DPAT, "... Special Pay and Incentives has received <applicant's> incentive package. It has been determined the member does not meet the requirement per instruction or the package is incomplete. The package is being returned without action for the following reason: - Pay date on 4021 block 6c does not match Incentive program."

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

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

ARPC/DPAT recommends granting the application. On 17 May 23, the recruiter signed AF IMT 1288 stated, "I shall receive a lump sum payment of \$10K/\$5K within 3 – 6 months after in-processing at my assigned reserve unit and approval actions of my bonus application with my Wing Talent Management Consultant (WTMC), ARPC/DPA and processed by local Reserve Pay Office (RPO)."

On 8 Jan 24, subsequent communications from the WTMC affirmed the bonus was expected to be issued as the "full \$10,000" after applicable taxes."

On 13 Apr 24, the applicant applied through his WTMC via myFSS. On 16 Apr 23, ARPC/DPATI advised the WTMC the applicant did not qualify for the enlisted affiliation bonus due to him having more than six years of service. According to Department of the Air Force Instruction (DAFI) 36-3012, *Military Entitlements*, Chapter 5, *Air Reserve Component (ARC) Incentive Program*, paragraph 5.4.5. *Affiliation*, states "An incentive granted to a qualified member who transfers directly from the RegAF or Individual Ready Reserve without a break in service and meets the following criteria: 5.4.5.6. Has less than six years of total military service." The applicant's military record shows the applicant's pay date as 1 Mar 16, which reflects that at the time of his application he had approximately seven years and four months of service time. ARPC/DPATI further advised the WTMC the applicant would potentially qualify for a prior service bonus and to correct the application and resubmit for review. No further corrections or submissions were submitted by the WTMC.

However, based on the analysis of the facts, there is evidence that an error or injustice has occurred. Documentation confirms the applicant's decision regarding continued service was directly influenced by erroneous guidance received through multiple levels of processing. Specifically, the applicant's commitment was contingent upon the expectation of receiving the \$10K affiliation bonus.

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 15 Apr 25 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. The Board concurs with the rationale and recommendation of ARPC/DPAT and finds a preponderance of the evidence substantiates the applicant's contentions. Specifically, the Board finds the applicant enlisted in the AFR under the premise he would receive an incentive bonus in the amount of \$10,000 in exchange for a three-year service commitment. Given he has fulfilled his obligation to meet all other eligibility requirements and the fact the purpose of the bonus is to retain highly skilled airmen, the Board finds denying the bonus he was promised would not only be a detriment to the applicant, but the Air Force as well. As such, the Board finds sufficient evidence to justify granting the applicant's request. 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 he was awarded a Fiscal Year 2023 Prior Service Incentive Bonus in exchange for his initial three-year term of enlistment he entered into on 1 Jul 23 in the Air Force Reserve.

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-2024-00040 in Executive Session on 13 May 25 and 15 May 25.

, Panel Chair
, Panel Member
, Panel Member

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

Exhibit A: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, dated 13 Dec 23.
Exhibit B: Documentary evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.
Exhibit C: Advisory opinion, ARPC/DPAT, dated 10 Apr 25.
Exhibit D: Notification of advisory, SAF/MRBC to applicant, dated 15 Apr 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.

X

Board Operations Manager, AFBCMR