



Work-Product

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2024-02818

Work-Product

COUNSEL: NONE

HEARING REQUESTED: YES

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

1. Acknowledge he was eligible for one additional year of Constructive Service Credit (CSC) based on a least seven years of qualifying ministry experience.
2. Correct his Date of Rank (DOR) to 29 Sep 16 to reflect this credit.
3. Apply Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1312.03, dated 22 Nov 13, as the controlling authority in his case.

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

Currently his Total Years of Service Date (TYSD) reflects 29 Sep 13, whereas it should correctly reflect 29 Sep 12. Additionally, his Date of Rank (DOR) reflects 29 Sep 17 when it should correctly reflect 29 Sep 16. When he received his commission into the Regular Air Force, there was a discrepancy with the computation of his TYSD. He was awarded three (3) years of CSC for his Master of Divinity Degree, but he did not receive an additional year of credit for completing a year-long Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) residency program or eight years of ministerial experience. CPE represents specialized training undertaken post Master degree that is essential for the operation roles of Chaplains. CSC is also provided to those who have at least seven (7) years of ministry experience prior to entering the Air Force as a Chaplain. His initial DD Form 2088, *Statement of Ecclesiastical Endorsement*, did not accurately reflect the years of experience and has since been revised by his ecclesiastical endorsing agent to reflect the correct number of years.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1312.03, *Entry Grade Credit for Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers*, paragraph 3.4.b.(4), states: "Additional credit for special training or experience in a particular officer career field as designated by the Secretaries of the Military Departments, if such training or experience is directly related to the operational needs of the officer's Military Service." CPE is defined as "...interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings theological students and ministers of all faiths into supervised encounter with persons in crisis." Furthermore, the completion of a year-long residency program in CPE enable a chaplain to earn a Special Experience Identifier (SEI). This designation is officially recorded on the chaplains Single Unit Retrieval Format (SURF).

What he seeks is fundamentally based on fairness. Others have received credit for the same accolades and his TYSD or DOR need to be corrected to align with established policy and ensure parity with fellow chaplains.

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The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is an Air Force Chaplain Corps captain (O-3).

On 19 May 15, according to his *Claremont School of Theology (Unofficial Transcript)*, provided by applicant, he was awarded a Master of Divinity degree.

On 29 Sep 16, according to AF Form 133, *Oath of Office (Military Personnel)*, he was appointed a First Lieutenant (O-2) Chaplain in the Reserve of the Air Force.

On 9 Oct 16, according to Special Order [Work-Product], dated 3 Oct 16, he was ordered to voluntary active duty in accordance with 10 USC 12301d for an indefinite period in the grade of first lieutenant.

On 2 Dec 16, according to *Statement of Service*, reflects he received three (3) years of constructive service credit for his Master of Divinity degree.

On 29 Sep 17, according to Special Order [Work-Product] he was promoted to the grade of captain with a DOR of 29 Sep 17.

On 26 Apr 24, according to applicant's email, *Date of Rank Adjustment*, he requested that his DOR be changed from 29 Sep 17 to 29 Sep 16 as he was erroneously appointed in the grade of O-2 instead of the correct grade of O-3. He contended that constructive service credit did not take into consideration his year of Clinical Pastoral Education.

On 30 Apr 24, AF/HCP, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, responded and disapproved the applicant's request and provided the following justification: "The USAF Chaplain Corps has issued constructive service credit of three years, commensurate with a 72 hour theological master's degree, IAW DoDI 1312.03, para. 3.4. We have only issued further service credit based on post-seminary ministry work of 1 year for six years served as an ordained/certified clergy member. CPE, though a good and useful tool, is not a necessary degree or specialization that the Chaplain Corps requires of their chaplains to perform chaplain duties. This is also why we do not give constructive service credit for other masters or doctoral degrees."

On 2 May 24, according to DAF Form 102, *Inspector General Complaint Form*, provided by applicant, he filed a complaint against AF/HCP for the reason "Dismissed my request with proper justification akin to 10 USC 533 and DoDI 1312.03, failed to credit me one additional year for specialized training received post-graduate education, and disregarded policy."

On 20 May 24, according to memorandum addressed to the applicant from the Chief of Chaplains, provided by applicant, [Work-Product], informed the applicant that he had reviewed his complaint and had appointed an independent Judge Advocate General (Investigation Officer (IO)). The applicant was further informed the IO thoroughly reviewed his complaint and found that his date of rank was processed properly and in accordance with all existing statutory and regulatory requirements. "In addition, the IO found that the Chaplain Corps provided appropriate constructive service credit required by 10 U.S.C. § 533, DODI 1304.28, DODI 1312.03, and DAFMAN 36-2032, Table 5.4. The Investigating Officer found that the Chaplain Corps did not err when it explained its disapproval of your request by stating that because the CPE degree is not required for appointment as a chaplain in the Air Force, constructive service credit is not provided for attaining it."

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

APPLICABLE AUTHORITY/GUIDANCE

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2005, *Appointment in Commissioned Grades and Designation and Assignment in Professional Categories – Reserve of the Air Force and United States Air Force*, **1 May 98**.

Table 2.6. Service Credit For Line Of The Air Force, Chaplain, Judge Advocate, And Air Force General Counsel's Honors Program Officers.

R U L E	A	B	C
	If the individual is	and has completed	then the amount of service credit awarded is (see note 1)
1	designated as a chaplain	a Master of Divinity or equivalent degrees as approved by HQ AFRS/RSOCC	3 years
2		7 or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry following completion of qualifying graduate educational credit or ordination, <i>whichever is later</i>	1 year
3		special experience or unique qualifications (Example: Dean of Seminary, or has national prominence)	1/2 year for each year up to a maximum of 3 years as determined by HQ AFPC/DPAH
4		AD commissioned service as chaplain	1 year for each year
5		commissioned service other than as a chaplain	1/2 year for each year (maximum 1 year)

AFI 36-2005, *Officer Accessions*, **2 Aug 17**. 10.5. *Service Credit for Chaplains*. Service Credit is awarded according to Table 10.2

Table 10.2. Service Credit for Chaplain Officers.

R U L E	A	B
	If the individual has successfully completed	then the amount of service credit awarded is (see note 1).
Constructive Service Credit		
6	a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree as approved by AF/HC	3 years (see note 3).

7	7 or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry following completion of qualifying graduate educational credit or ordination, whichever is later	1 year.
8	special experience or unique qualifications (EXAMPLE: Dean of Seminary, or has national prominence)	1/2 year for each year up to a maximum of 3 years as determined by AFPC/DP2NH, ANG/HC, or AFRC/HC (see note 3).

Department of the Air Force Manual (DAFMAN) 36-2032, Military Recruiting and Accessions, 16 Jan 25, Chapter 5, *Officer Accessions*, 5.6. *Chaplain Corps*, 5.14.5. Service Credit for Chaplains. Service credit is awarded for chaplains according to **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4. Prior Active Service Credit For Chaplain Officers.

R U L E	A	B
	If the individual has successfully completed	then the amount of service credit awarded is, see Notes 1 through 3.
Constructive Service Credit, see Note 6.		
7	a Master of Divinity or equivalent degree as approved by AF/HC.	3 years.
8	7 or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry following completion of qualifying graduate educational credit or ordination, whichever is later.	1 year.
9	special experience or unique qualifications, e.g., Dean of Seminary, or has national prominence.	1/2 year for each year up to a maximum of 3 years as determined by AFPC/DPMH, ANG/HC, or AFRC/HC.

Note 6. Credit for **Rules 7** through **9** must not exceed 6 years of credit; credit for **Rules 8** and **9** must not exceed 3 years.

Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1304.28, *The Appointment and Service of Chaplains*, 12 May 21 (Chg 1, 8 May 24), 3.5.Chaplain Application Requirements, b. Applicants will be appointed as chaplains in accordance with Sections 531 and 12203 of Title 10, U.S.C. and DoDI 1310.02. Applicants will be awarded entry grade credit in accordance with Sections 533 and 12207 of Title 10, U.S.C. and DoDI 1312.03.

DoDI 1312.03, *Entry Grade Credit for Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers*, 28 Dec 18. 3.5. Constructive Service Credit Limitations And Authority For Judge Advocates And Chaplains. a. The total amount of constructive service credit awarded to judge advocates and chaplains for advanced education may not exceed 3 years. b. Constructive service credit for training or experience will be awarded in accordance with Paragraph 3.4.b.(4).

3.4. Constructive Service Credit. b. Constructive service credit awarded under this paragraph will be determined in accordance with these guidelines: (4) Additional credit for special training or experience in a particular officer career field as designated by the Secretaries of the Military Departments, if such training or experience is directly related to the operational needs of the officer's Military Service.

DoDI 1312.03, Service Credit for Commissioned Officers, 6 Oct 06: 6.1.2.4.1. Chaplains

6.1.2.4.1.1. Entry grade for appointment designation or assignment shall not exceed 3 years.

6.1.2.4.1.2. Seven or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry shall not exceed 1 year.

6.1.2.4.1.3. Unusual cases involving special experience or unique qualifications as determined by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned shall not exceed one-half year for each year up to 3 years of credit.

10 U.S. Code Table,

(b) (1) Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the military department concerned shall credit a person who is receiving an original appointment in a commissioned grade (other than a commissioned warrant officer grade) in the Regular Army, Regular Navy, Regular Air Force, Regular Marine Corps, or Regular Space Force and who has advanced education or training or special experience with constructive service for such education, training, or experience as follows:

(A) One year for each year of advanced education beyond the baccalaureate degree level, for persons appointed, designated, or assigned in officer categories requiring such advanced education or an advanced degree as a prerequisite for such appointment, designation, or assignment. In determining the number of years of constructive service to be credited under this clause to officers in any professional field, the Secretary concerned shall credit an officer with, but with not more than, the number of years of advanced education required by a majority of institutions that award degrees in that professional field for completion of the advanced education or award of the advanced degree.

(D) Additional credit as follows: (i) For special training or experience in a particular officer field as designated by the Secretary concerned, if such training or experience is directly related to the operational needs of the armed force concerned.

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

AFRS/A3OH recommends denying the request. Based on the documentation provided by the applicant and analysis of the facts, there is no evidence of an error or injustice by using DAFMAN 36-2032, Table 5.4 in calculating his DOR. The applicant contends that his Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) should qualify for Constructive Service Credit according to DoDI 1312.03, paragraph 3.4.b.(4). He highlights this paragraph and particularly notes in green highlight that these additional credits are "designated by the Secretaries of the Military Departments." The applicant does not make mention of how the Secretary of the Air Force has designated this credit which can be found in DAFMAN 36-2032, Table 5.4, "Prior Active Service credit for Chaplain Officers" under rules 8 and 9. Rule 8 would not apply in his case as it requires seven (7) years and

the program he mentions was only one year. Rule 9 speaks of special experience or unique qualifications as determined by AFPC/DPMH. CPE has consistently never been considered a unique qualifier for the purpose of grade calculation. Even if CPE was considered a unique qualifier in this case, he would still only receive a one-half (1/2) year constructive service credits for his year-long course and not the one year he is requesting.

He also contends that “My initial DD Form 2088, *Statement of Ecclesiastical Endorsement*, did not accurately reflect the years of experience and has since been revised by my ecclesiastical endorsing agent with the correct number of years.” While he submitted an updated DD Form 2088 to reflect seven (7) years of experience, he does not express the entirety of Rule 8 from the aforementioned table that states “7 or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry following completion of qualifying graduate educational credit or ordination, whichever is later.” In his case, he had more than seven (7) years of ordination, but he completed his qualifying degree on 19 May 15, as noted on his transcript. Since his graduation date is later than his ordination date, it is the baseline for the seven (7) years calculation and thus he did not meet the seven (7) year threshold when he applied in 2016. BOTH variables in Rule 8 must be met in order to receive this additional year of service credit.

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 24 Apr 25 for comment (Exhibit D), and the applicant replied on 29 Apr 25. In his response, the applicant contended that he is a victim of injustice due to inequity he experienced in the accession process. This is exemplified in the comparable case of a fellow chaplain who was accessed one year after him who received an additional year of CSC for completing the same CPE residency program and was accessed as a captain (O-3). If the purpose of CSC is to equitably acknowledge and reward unique qualifications and relevant experience, he respectfully requests clarification on why he did not receive similar consideration as a fair, consistent, and transparent application of CSC policy is essential to the accession process.

In addition, the advisory recommended his request be denied based on DAFMAN 36-2032, Table 5.4, dated 16 Jan 25. However, this policy did not exist at the time of his accession in 2016; was first published as Air Force Manual (AFMAN) 36-2032 on 27 Sep 19; and cannot be retroactively applied without specific authority, which is not present in the manual. Therefore, the use of DAFMAN 36-2032, dated 16 Jan 25, is procedurally and legally inappropriate. His accession should have been governed by the directives in place at the time; specifically DoDI 1312.03, dated 22 Nov 13, which states “Seven or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry must not exceed 1 year of credit”.

The applicant’s complete response is at Exhibit E.

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 not the victim of an error or injustice. The Board concurs with the rationale and recommendation of AFRS/A3OH and finds a

preponderance of the evidence does not substantiate the applicant's contentions. The applicant contends his Clinical Pastoral Education should qualify for an additional year of Constructive Service Credit. Further, he contends that the use of criteria contained within DAFMAN 36-2032, Table 5.4, dated 16 Jan 25, is procedurally and legally inappropriate and cannot be retroactively applied. The Board disagrees. 10 United States Code § 533 - Service credit upon original appointment as a commissioned officer, states that additional credit are designated by the Secretary concerned. In the applicant's case, these additional credit designations are determined by the Secretary of the Air Force and can be found in the governing directive, DAFMAN 26-2032, *Military Recruiting and Accessions*, and its predecessors, AFI 36-2005, *Officer Accessions*, to include AFI 36-2005, *Appointment in Commissioned Grades and Designation and Assignment in Professional Categories – Reserve of the Air Force and United States Air Force*, dated 1 May 98. Each of the preceding contains the applicable rule "7 or more years of extensive practical experience in a ministry following completion of qualifying graduate educational credit or ordination, whichever is later." In this regard, the Board notes as his degree awarding graduation date post-dates his ordination date, the Board determines he did not meet the eligibility criteria to be awarded an additional year of service credit. Further, the Board notes that both DAFMAN 36-2032 and its predecessors, only allow for one-half year of service credit to be awarded for special experience or unique qualifications. Thus, even if the Air Force considered his Clinical Pastoral Experience as a unique qualifier, he would only receive one-half year of service credit. However, the Board finds his CPE not to be a unique qualifier for the purpose of grade calculation. Therefore, the Board recommends against correcting the applicant's records.

4. The applicant has not shown a personal appearance, with or without counsel, would materially add to the Board's understanding of the issues involved.

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-2024-02818 in Executive Session on 21 May 25:

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Panel Chair
Panel Member
Panel Member

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

- Exhibit A: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, dated 6 Aug 24.
- Exhibit B: Documentary evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.
- Exhibit C: Advisory Opinion, AFRS/A3OH, dated 18 Apr 25.
- Exhibit D: Notification of Advisory, SAF/MRBC to Applicant, dated 24 Apr 25.
- Exhibit E: Applicant's Response, w/atchs, dated 29 Apr 25.

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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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